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THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE UNDER GOODWIN KNIGHT

Interviews with:

Douglas Barrett
Tom M. Bright
Sadie Perlin Groves
Maryalice Lemmon
Paul Mason

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Governmental History Documentation Project
Goodwin Knight/Edmund Brown, Sr. Era

THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE UNDER GOODWIN KNIGHT

Douglas Barrett	Goodwin Knight's Governor's Office, 1953-1958, and the Youth Authority, 1958-1965
Tom M. Bright	The Governor's Office of Goodwin J. Knight, 1953-1958
Sadie Perlin Groves	A Career as Private Secretary to Goodwin Knight, 1952-1958
Maryalice Lemmon	Working in the Governor's Office, 1950-1959
Paul Mason	Covering the Legislature for Governor Goodwin J. Knight

Interviews Conducted by
James H. Rowland and Sarah Sharp
in 1979

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PREFACE

Covering the years 1953 to 1966, the Goodwin Knight-Edmund G. "Pat" Brown, Sr., Oral History Series is the second phase of the Governmental History Documentation Project begun by the Regional Oral History Office in 1969. That year inaugurated the Earl Warren Era Oral History Project, which produced interviews with Earl Warren and other persons prominent in politics, criminal justice, government administration, and legislation during Warren's California era, 1925 to 1953.

The Knight-Brown series of interviews carries forward the earlier inquiry into the general topics of: the nature of the governor's office, its relationships with the legislature and with its own executive departments, biographical data about Governors Knight and Brown and other leaders of the period, and methods of coping with the rapid social and economic changes of the state. Key issues documented for 1953-1966 were: the rise and decline of the Democratic party, the impact of the California Water Plan, the upheaval of the Vietnam War escalation, the capital punishment controversy, election law changes, new political techniques forced by television and increased activism, reorganization of the executive branch, the growth of federal programs in California, and the rising awareness of minority groups. From a wider view across the twentieth century, the Knight-Brown period marks the final era of California's Progressive period, which was ushered in by Governor Hiram Johnson in 1910 and which provided for both parties the determining outlines of government organization and political strategy until 1966.

The Warren Era political files, which interviewers had developed cooperatively to provide a systematic background for questions, were updated by the staff to the year 1966 with only a handful of new topics added to the original ninety-one. An effort was made to record in greater detail those more significant events and trends by selecting key participants who represent diverse points of view. Most were queried on a limited number of topics with which they were personally connected; a few narrators who possessed unusual breadth of experience were asked to discuss a multiplicity of subjects. Although the time frame of the series ends at the November 1966 election, when possible the interviews trace events on through that date in order to provide a logical baseline for continuing study of succeeding administrations. Similarly, some narrators whose experience includes the Warren years were questioned on that earlier era as well as the Knight-Brown period.

The present series has been financed by grants from the California State Legislature through the California Heritage Preservation Commission and the office of the Secretary of State, and by some individual donations. Portions of several memoirs were funded partly by the California Women in Politics Project under a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, including a matching grant from the Rockefeller Foundation; the two projects were produced concurrently in this office, a joint effort made feasible by overlap of narrators, topics, and staff expertise.

The Regional Oral History Office was established to tape record autobiographical interviews with persons significant in the history of California and the West. The Office is under the administrative direction of James D. Hart, Director of The Bancroft Library, and Willa Baum, head of the Office.

Amelia R. Fry, Project Director
Gabrielle Morris, Project Coordinator

1 January 1980
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Goodwin Knight/Edmund Brown, Sr. Era

Douglas Barrett

GOODWIN KNIGHT'S GOVERNOR'S OFFICE, 1953-1958, AND THE YOUTH AUTHORITY, 1958-1965

An Interview Conducted by
Sarah Sharp
in 1979

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INTERVIEW HISTORY

The daily activities of the governor's office in Sacramento are excellent topics for oral history documentation because so much of what occurs there is often lost from view. Douglas Barrett worked in the governor's office from 1953 through 1958, when Goodwin J. Knight was governor of California. As well as filling various administrative secretarial positions there, Mr. Barrett also became a close personal friend of Goodwin and Virginia Knight.

Because of his good working sense of history and his fondness for "the Boss," as he affectionately often referred to Governor Knight, Doug Barrett made a very enthusiastic and receptive interviewee who loved to reminisce about his years in Sacramento. Because he is kept quite busy with his duties as assistant to John Henning, head of the California Labor Federation in San Francisco, we scheduled our first interview on a Saturday morning, 3 March 1979, at the offices of the Regional Oral History Office. During our first interview, Mr. Barrett told of his background in newspaper work, years which led to his first appointment in state government as assistant press secretary to Newton Stearns in the governor's office in 1953. This appointment came shortly after Goodwin Knight had become governor. Throughout the session, the interviewer was concerned with getting a detailed picture of how the governor's office functioned in Sacramento. Mr. Barrett candidly related how his own position, as well as those of other administrative secretaries, shifted from post to post within this office depending upon what Governor Knight's administrative needs were.

The second interview was held on the afternoon of 27 April 1979 at the pleasant Berkeley apartment which Mr. Barrett shares with his wife, Barbara Barrett. The apartment is filled with many mementoes including pictures of the Barretts' children and grandchildren. While the interviewer prepared her tape recorder and notes, Mrs. Barrett served coffee and cookies as Mr. Barrett settled into a comfortable easy chair set in one corner of the sunny living room. In the hour and a half which followed, Mr. Barrett related his ideas about Goodwin Knight's possible vice-presidential bid in 1956, the turmoil of the 1957-1958 "Big Switch," as well as a few thoughts regarding Knight's years after he left Sacramento. After Mr. Barrett ended his years juggling several administrative secretarial positions, Governor Knight appointed him a member of the Youth Authority Board. This opened a new career for Mr. Barrett and was the source of fruitful comments about the juvenile corrections system in California. This appointment continued from 1958 through 1965. Although there was not sufficient time to explore the rest of Mr. Barrett's interesting and full career, after he left the Youth Authority he also spent several years on the Adult Authority.

Mr. Barrett reviewed thoroughly the two transcripts of these interviews. Perhaps because of his long years as a newspaper editor, he was very aware of our production schedules and returned both manuscripts promptly, making only slight changes in wording. Mr. Barrett had also been of great help in this interviewer's general research into the administration of Goodwin Knight. During the initial interview, Mr. Barrett helped us to develop part of the list of people to be interviewed. He also arranged for the interviewer to use the California Labor Federation library in San Francisco for additional research. In sum, Mr. Barrett gave freely of his time and talent for this important documentation of the governor's office under Goodwin Knight.

Dr. Sarah Sharp
Interviewer-Editor

9 June 1980
Regional Oral History Office
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I FAMILY BACKGROUND AND YOUTH

[Interview 1: March 3, 1979]##

Sharp: I'll start by giving you some biographical questions. I'd like to ask you first of all what your full name is.

Barrett: I consistently use Douglas Barrett. However, I was born Walter Douglas. When I went into the army, I failed to answer to Walter, so then I switched my first name to the middle. In later life, I've been Douglas W., but Douglas is the name, though. It's consistently been Douglas.

Sharp: Where were you born?

Barrett: Mountain Home, Idaho.

Sharp: And who are your parents?

Barrett: My parents are still living. My father's only a little over nineteen years older than I am, and my mother is about eighteen years older. They're in west Sacramento. Mr. and Mrs. Walter Barrett.

Sharp: And your brothers and sisters?

Barrett: I have one sister.

Sharp: What is her name?

##This symbol indicates that a tape or a segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes see page 89.

Barrett: Dorothy Leamon.

Sharp: Where does she live?

Barrett: In west Sacramento.

Sharp: Where were your parents born?

Barrett: My father was born in Mountain Home, Idaho. My mother's birthplace was Fairbury, Nebraska. She spent most of her life after infancy in the West, in California, practically until she married.

Sharp: What is their ethnic background?

Barrett: Ethnic? Yankee Doodle? [laughter]

Both families go way back in the history of the American Revolution. I have genealogical material at home that indicates direct descent from Roger Williams of Rhode Island on one side and to colonial Virginia. If you follow the genealogy, it seemed to come west through the Ohio, then in Missouri and Texas, and up to Idaho.

Sharp: Very typical.

Barrett: Very typical frontier movement. In fact, when my father's family reunion--Barretts, Shermans, and Buchons--when it's held, it's usually held in Oregon. We're about as far south as the family has come on the West Coast. The family reunion I'm talking about is based on common descent from my great-grandfather, who was a circuit-riding Free Methodist minister in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington.

Sharp: How interesting! Getting back to your family, which sibling are you?

Barrett: In rank of birth?

Sharp: Yes.

Barrett: I'm the eldest.

Sharp: Where did you grow up?

Barrett: We lived in Idaho until I was about three years old. Then we moved over to Portland. We left there shortly after I was five. We went to Woodland, California and then stayed there until I

Barrett: was about sixteen. Then, except for my war service, I was in Truckee until I went to the governor's office in 1953.*

Sharp: Did you like school when you were a boy?

Barrett: Yes. Yes.

Sharp: Did you have any favorite classes?

Barrett: I seem to have favored English and history more than I did math and science, but I don't recall getting startling failures in anything!

Sharp: Did you have books at home?

Barrett: Oh, yes! I had a library card before I started school.

Sharp: And your family would take you to the library and let you roam around in the stacks?

Barrett: Or they'd drop me off there. My mother and father taught me to read before I went to school. We're, you might say not literary, but literally minded people. Our whole background is newspaper. It's not only an immediate mother-father thing but almost a generational thing.

Sharp: Your father's worked on newspapers?

Barrett: Just before I went to the governor's office in '53, my father and I were publishing The Sierra Sun in Truckee, [California] and he continued to publish it. As a matter of fact, he'll be the individual who published that paper longer than anybody else in its history.

He went there in '36 and retired in '67. Now it's owned by a syndicate and they change editors and publishers rather freely. But we came to California for my father to have the opportunity to go to work on my uncle's newspaper, the Daily Mail of Woodland; he was my mother's brother.

---

*Mr. Barrett held various administrative secretarial positions in Governor Goodwin Knight's office from 1953 to 1958.

Barrett: So you might say as far as the memory of man runneth, I've been around the newspaper background, and been encouraged to read, and so forth. I wrote my first newspaper story when I was twelve. (Well, it's because my uncle owned the newspaper!) [laughter] Which accounts for a lot of prodigal behavior, I think, in a lot of people.

Sharp: Did you go to college?

Barrett: Yes.

Sharp: Where?

Barrett: I went to San Mateo Junior College. I went to Sacramento City College. I can't pretend that it was early because a lot of my credits have been acquired within the last decade, but I do have the record of attendance at the University of California, Berkeley. I'm a life member of the [California] Alumni Association. I don't have a degree, though. [laughter]

Sharp: So you went to college for a while and then you started working on a newspaper?

Barrett: Yes. Actually what happened, I left school to go into the service.

Sharp: What branch of the service?

Barrett: I was a code and cipher clerk, a cryptographer, in the air force during World War II. I also edited base newspapers because that was in my Form 120 [a personnel records form]. [laughter] But actually I was in the service as a code man. Code and cipher.

Sharp: Then you left the service and--

Barrett: --went back to the newspaper.

Sharp: Back to Truckee?

Barrett: Yes. I was involved in the newspaper even when I was going to college because I'd go home weekends. I was the printer and I wrote editorials--all of what you do on a family newspaper.

Sharp: Everything.

Barrett: Everything!

Sharp: How did you first get interested in politics, then? Or did you?

Barrett: I can't remember when I wasn't. I think it's concomitant with being around small newspapers, particularly one like my uncle's in Woodland.

For example, I remember seeing in my uncle's office Governor Friend W. Richardson--that was following, I think, after Richardson was out of office.* You see, Governor Richardson was a newspaper man. He had known my uncle and I think Richardson published in Berkeley, California, if I'm not mistaken. I could be mistaken about that.

And my uncle's first newspaper in California--no, the second newspaper--was the Fairfield Republican. So they were fairly close in proximity.

I saw Governor Frank F. Merriam when I was a cub scout. He came in once.

Sharp: What was your uncle's name?

Barrett: Eugene C. Stowe. Stowe was my mother's maiden name.

---

*Friend W. Richardson was Republican governor of California from 1923 through 1926. Richardson owned and published several newspapers--the San Bernardino Times-Index, the Berkeley Gazette, and the Alameda Times-Star.

II EARLY ACQUAINTANCESHIP WITH GOODWIN KNIGHT

Sharp: I'd like to ask you now some questions about Goodwin Knight and the period before he was lieutenant governor. Were you aware of Goodwin Knight in this early period when he was a judge in Los Angeles?

Barrett: No. My first connection came with him when he was lieutenant governor. Going back to the Woodland experience, our next door neighbor, when we [mother and father] lived in the apartment on Main Street, was [Robert] Alderman. We kept in touch with Bob. He was manager of the Woodland Chamber of Commerce. From there, he moved over into Sacramento. He was an aide to Lieutenant Governor [George J.] Hatfield* when Knight became lieutenant governor and Alderman left Hatfield. Hatfield was by then a state senator and Bob somehow evolved into Knight's office, and I became acquainted with Knight through Bob.

Sharp: Did Goodwin Knight, when you first came into contact with him when he was lieutenant governor, seem "gubernatorial timber," as they say?

Barrett: I tend to regard anybody that has made it as far as lieutenant governor as at least a potential governor. Knight and I hit it off quite well from the time we came together, so my answer would have to be subjective. I did believe he was.

---

*George J. Hatfield was lieutenant governor of California under Governor Frank F. Merriam, 1935-1938.

Barrett: On the other hand, when Knight was exploring the possibility in 1950 of opposing [Governor Earl] Warren in the primary election, I was one of the small handful of Republican county chairmen in the state--Republicans committed to Earl Warren. It didn't affect my friendship with Goodwin Knight and I discussed it. I said, "You know, if Earl Warren goes again, I go with him."

He accepted this and I did make a commitment to Warren, but 1950 was the last time. From then on, if he went along--ran again for lieutenant governor, I would support him. When Knight got ready to run for governor, I said that I would support him and I did.

Sharp: It's been said that Goodwin Knight had more backing and power in the early fifties than Richard Nixon did. And that he, Goodwin Knight, could have been U.S. Senator, if he had wanted to be.

Barrett: That's true.

Sharp: But he really wanted to be governor instead?

Barrett: That's right.

Goodwin Knight has told me--well, he didn't stand around and repeat it like a parrot, but many times told me of his antipathy for Washington [D.C.] as a place to live. He would much rather be one of forty-eight governors than one of ninety-six Senators. He enjoyed the governorship.

In 1950, it was a hard, cold fact that if Knight had told the people that controlled the movements of such things, he could have [had] the Senatorial nomination without strain or opposition. He made his decision not to run for governor, not to run for United States Senator, but to run for lieutenant governor again, because, as I say, he wasn't all that happy about going to Washington.

Sharp: Who were the people who told him that he could run for Senator and get the job if he wanted it?

Barrett: Well, I can't testify to that. I wasn't that close in at that time. You know, I was just one of the boys, although I was on the Republican State Central Committee and so forth.* But if you

---

*Mr. Barrett later added that he was on the Republican State Central Committee "by virtue of being chairman of the Nevada County Central Committee."

Barrett: want to deal in generality, at that time the Republican party more or less revolved around an axis which--well, it couldn't be called an axis because it had three points--the Los Angeles Times, the Oakland Tribune, the San Francisco Chronicle at least spoke for--I can't say that those people controlled it, but the De Young-Thierot family in San Francisco, the Knowland family here [Oakland], and the Chandlers in Los Angeles were the most obvious people in power in the Republican party.

Sharp: How do you mean "in power"?

Barrett: Because they had the organs for dissemination of information and that sort of thing. It's not so much a matter of power, I suppose, as a matter of speaking for the people who did get power.

I don't think, for instance, anybody controlled Earl Warren. I'm sure that if they could have controlled Goodwin Knight, he might have served two terms as governor and he might have served no time as a governor. It wasn't that heavy dependence.

The Democrat party hadn't yet really found its strongest footing in California. The [Culbert L.] Olson administration really hadn't taken off and built a base upon which the Democratic party could rise historically. The Republican party was politics in California.

Sharp: And these newspapers had the funds as well?

Barrett: No. I don't know that they were the funders so much as they were the voice. They were part of the judgment. As I say, I wasn't in the inner circle at that point. I really didn't know.

III REMEMBERING THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE, 1953-1958

The Governor's Office in Transition: From Earl Warren to Goodwin Knight##

Sharp: I'd like to ask you some questions involving a comparison between Goodwin Knight and Earl Warren. It's usually difficult in any office when one boss leaves and a new one comes in. Was there a difficult period of adjustment when Goodwin Knight took over in October '53?

Barrett: It wasn't my impression. I think the people who were flatly die-hard pro-Warren and not for Knight had voluntarily left with Warren. There were several people that could breach the gap. As I say, I was not close to Warren, but I was affiliated with the Warren administration.

I don't know if I could personally have worked for Earl Warren. He was much more rigid than Goodwin as a boss.

Verne Scoggins left. Of course, Warren appointed him to the PUC [Public Utilities Commission]. "Pop" [Merrell F.] Small left to go with Thomas Kuchel. But I'd known "Pop" Small since we were both newspapering in the high Sierras. He was, too, a small-town newspaper publisher in Quincy, [California]. We maintained personally cordial relationships. Newt Stearns had been assistant press secretary under Scoggins in the Warren administration and was immediately accepted by Knight as press secretary instead of bringing his own in. I won't evaluate that objectively or subjectively either. Mal Harris had been there as a Warren hold-over. True, Harris had come towards the latter years of the Warren administration and was a registered Democrat.

Barrett: That's another thing. We had almost as many registered Democrats as we did Republicans throughout. About half native Californians and half adopted. Ironically, Tom Bright, one of the what you might call pure Knight appointees, was, and remains, a registered Democrat. He was close to Paul Mason. He'd come out of newspaper and wire service backgrounds. In fact, he became director of [the Department of] Motor Vehicles in the [Edmund G.] Brown, Sr. administration.

Particularly considering the public view of the differences between Warren and Knight during their mutual service as governor and lieutenant governor, I would say that the transition was almost unnoticeable. But that's only from my own viewpoint. I don't know how anybody else would see it. But I had no feeling of being among people who were not committed to the same things I was committed to as an appointee of Goodwin Knight.

For instance, all of the ladies that worked as my secretary in various offices that I was in came there with Earl Warren. They had started under Earl Warren's administration. Now, they could have all been dumped out on the street by Goodwin Knight. None was. None left, except voluntarily.

There were two ladies there that are kind of sleepers in this whole thing--Alice Anderson and Marguerite Gallagher. Maryalice [Lemmon] is no sleeper--she's obvious; she's out front.

Marguerite Gallagher carried the title of administrative assistant in the Knight administration. She was a carry-over from the Warren administration. Alice Anderson, you might say, was chief of staff of the people who really did the work: the typists, the mail room workers. She lived up in, I believe, Newcastle, and commuted [to Sacramento].

Technically, Alice Anderson had been there in the closing days of the [Governor Culbert] Olson administration. I think she survived the Knight administration, or could have if she wanted to.

The transition, while there may have been a lot of changes--well, not a lot, but there may have been several changes at the public or apparent level--the office continued to work smoothly because there were so many people who could say to the newcomer in the office, "Whoa, wait a minute, mister. This isn't the way we used to do it."

Barrett: There wasn't a lady that worked with me from the day I started with pine needles in my hair until the day I left with the governor--when I walked out with the governor--who hadn't been there during the Warren administration. And I consider them all my friends today.

I was asked to speak for the Knight administration when Madeline Doty retired. They had somebody from the Warren administration, somebody from the Knight administration, and somebody from the Brown administration. She was the chief receptionist. She had the front desk. She went clear through to the Brown administration. She was the first impression that anybody that came into the office got, except when she wasn't on the job.

She was a woman who wore rather thick glasses. Otherwise, within the middle years when I first knew her, never, never forgot somebody who came in. She kept a roster of them as they came in, but if you came in and you had a cyst on your neck when you came in three years before, she'd ask you how it came out when you came in the next time.

Sharp: That's amazing!

Barrett: She's a wonderful woman.

Sharp: Especially considering the number of people who had gone through a governor's office to have interviews or appointments with him and whatnot.

Barrett: Yes. Well, and not only with the governor but with any member of the staff. I'm talking about the main reception desk as you go in to the door.

A Foot in the Door: Appointment as Assistant Press Secretary##

Sharp: You said that you first met Goodwin Knight when he was lieutenant governor then?

Barrett: That's right.

Sharp: When did he ask you to be assistant press secretary?

Barrett: I think I was about the second person he called as far as the personal staff was concerned. Paul Mason was his first choice--on his staff. As you know from your interviews, Knight didn't have a grand turnout. He didn't indulge in mass discharges of the Warren staff.

I had contemplated earlier that year the possibility of returning to Idaho and the newspaper business. I had talked to Knight at Easter. His advice was, vaguely, "Stick around. We're going places and I want you to go with me." But actually, Bob Alderman made the call.

If you know anything about the weekly newspaper business, it was Wednesday afternoon quite late. Bob said, "We want you to go to work for us."

I said, "For Pete's sake, I've already given you my word that I'll take your campaign throughout this congressional district if that's what you want. But, Bob, I'm in the midst of getting out a paper. I'm in ink up to my elbows."

He said, "Well, that isn't what I mean. The governor wants to talk to you about coming down to Sacramento."

I really hadn't contemplated that. So he started describing some of the things. I still remember my response. He was telling me all the people I would meet there, and I said, "To hell with the prestige. What does it pay?" Because we were on that kind of terms. I mean it wasn't that cynical a statement. Bob laughed and he said, "Well, I think we can improve on what you've got where you are."

"Fine," I said, "if you can wait until Friday, I'll come down." I went down that Friday and talked to the governor and he asked me. Then that same day, I think, he announced the appointment of John Synon to the staff. So, he asked me--I think my first approach was that I had to clear it with my partner, who was my father, and my family. I had a wife and four small daughters. How would they feel about it?

He said, "Fine. How soon do you think you could come to work?" And I said, "How soon do you want me?" "No," I said, "if you leave it that way, why, it would keep forever." So we set a December 1st deadline for me to dissolve my interest in the mountains, locate a home, and move the family out and so forth.

Barrett: But it was in early October that we talked. In fact, I missed a testimonial dinner for Governor Knight which I had planned to attend in San Francisco because I was getting ready to come down and join the staff. [laughter] The job came like that, right out of the blue, to me. It wasn't incongruous or anything; it's when you've lived all your life in a town of two thousand people and here's the governor of California needing you, you know, that sort of thing. So that's where we were.

Sharp: He obviously did need you because relationships with the press and somebody to handle them are very important.

Barrett: I brought two things, I think, in, besides my inexperience. That was my long history of political involvement. I started in when I was eighteen, not on behalf of a Republican candidate--I was working for the Progressive Raymond Haight. I followed him into the Republican party. Haight pulled out and then he later became Republican national committeeman.

I stayed Republican until 1958. I made the statement, if Bill Knowland's nominated, I'll change my registration; if Bill Knowland's elected, I'll change my residence. [laughter] So I had been politically active, but I hadn't been politically regular. That I brought into the office.

In addition to that, Knight particularly and peculiarly had a feeling for rural and small-town California as opposed to many of the politicians who wouldn't waste their time in the rural precincts. In fact, that was one thing we had done in 1953. I helped plan a tour for him through the mountain counties and he went into communities and spoke before audiences that had not seen a statewide officer in the whole history of the county. I was a contact for the weekly rural press, that sort of thing, that was otherwise not really covered except by the press secretary, [who] was always available to anybody, but there's a peculiar thing about country newspapers in that they respond to direct, personalized contacts.

The 1954 Gubernatorial Campaign##

Intra-Party Struggles

Sharp: First of all, could you tell us about the setting for the 1954 gubernatorial campaign and the power struggle between Goodwin Knight, Richard Nixon, and William Knowland?

Barrett: What are you talking about? The campaign itself or the Republican State Central Committee?

Sharp: The committee. We know that Goodwin Knight triumphed in his struggle to get the vice-chairmanship of the party--

Barrett: That's true.

Sharp: --with Howard Ahmanson becoming the vice-chairman.

Barrett: That's true.

Sharp: And we know that Richard Nixon may have been seeking the governorship in California and William Knowland--

Barrett: No. I don't think there was any question of Nixon at that time contemplating being governor of California. I think he was simply trying to control the Republican mechanism in California. Frankly, in 1954, we didn't think of Knowland in any other terms than that of being a spokesman for the remainder of the Warren group in the party.

When the state central committee met in August of '54--it may have been earlier than that in the summer--we frankly didn't look to a divided party. The situation was that Earl Warren had been governor and there had been a party structure within the central committee which was answerable to him. The logical heir to the chairmanship, unless there was a revolution or at least a strong evolution, was the vice-chairman, Tom [Thomas] Caldecott. I believe that George Murphy was chairman prior to the convention and during the convention in '54. Laughlin Waters had been elected chairman in 1952 but resigned in 1953 when he became U.S. attorney for southern California and Murphy was named because the vice-chairman cannot succeed; the law provides the chairmanship shall alternate between northern and southern California. Caldecott was from Alameda County.

The convention and the central committee meet simultaneously, you understand. George Murphy was chairman then. He told me--I heard him directly--he and I were talking about it. He had taken it on the assurance that it was a ceremonial job that wouldn't entail him being involved in a great deal of controversy or anything else, and that's what he was talking about. We were in the midst of the '54 convention and he certainly had not been led to understand that he might have to preside in this situation.

Barrett: But there was recognition that Tom Caldecott, who is now district court judge in this area, would become chairman. He was an assemblyman at that time and he was, at least at that point in time, regarded as what we would call a "Warren man." We were agreeable in the Knight group to having Caldecott as chairman, and I'd known Tom from my own time on the state central committee. In other words, we didn't feel this great division and so we were looking to Caldecott for chairman.

The Knight group would succeed to the vice-chairmanship so that when Caldecott's term came to an end, Knight's man would be chairman for the time that the governor was running, theoretically, for reelection. That was Howard Ahmanson.

The agreement among the Warren, Knight, and Nixon supporters was recognizing the importance of having the vice-president of the United States from California simply as a bit of local pride and power. The consensus was that--at least partly understood by the three recognized factions, the consensus was that Ray Arbuthnot would be treasurer of the central committee and would progressively move into the chairmanship at a time when it might be more advantageous to Vice-President Nixon to have the state chairman in his particular coterie.

When we discovered the movement to displace Ahmanson with Arbuthnot, frankly, those of us who were in the office at least, I think our first reaction was shock that this contest was upcoming and we had to mobilize rather quickly to face the contest. [laughter]

Sharp: I can see that!

Barrett: I think it was a foolish move on the part of the Nixon people because the state central committee and the state convention was and is organized so that it's most heavily slanted toward the state party as opposed to the state people in the national party.*

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*In his later editing of this manuscript, Mr. Barrett put into this group of "Nixon people," Pat Hillings, Murray Chotiner, Joe Holt, Justin Dart and Jack Drown, as well as Vice-President Nixon himself.

Barrett: Each nominee for public office, for partisan public office, is entitled to his own vote and three additional places on the committee. Then each county chairman has his or her own place, and this extended to the representatives in Congress.

Well, there were at that time, I think, twenty-five representatives in Congress. So if you take the 120 members of the legislature, the fifty-eight county chairmen, and the state officers, and fit them in an opposition to the twenty-five congressmen and theirs, an open contest tilts to the in-state partisans. The fact of the matter was that we had at least one congressman, Charles S. Gubser, who didn't go along with the Nixon move--what we can refer to, loosely at least, as the Nixon move--to displace Ahmanson as the candidate for vice-chairman.

The mathematics was against it. Their only hope was, I think, that they were going to catch us by surprise. At least, that's the way it looked to us.

Sharp: Yes, that's the way it looked to us in terms of the research.

Well, Goodwin Knight must have had a unique relationship with the Republican party in '54, then, because he had been governor, essentially, for about a year. Was there any thought that someone else might be governor instead of Goodwin Knight, or was it just seen a logical--?

Barrett: Well, as I say, Warren appointed me to the executive committee of the state central committee even though I was less than thirty--I don't remember exactly--because he had to appoint a county chairman; and I don't think there were three others of the fifty-eight that would support him.

But broadly within the party, among the voters, I don't think there was any contemplation that there would be any other candidate for governor. Oh, there was talk of [Thomas] Kuchel and [Robert] Kirkwood. Let me put it this way: when we were aware that there was a list within the Democratic party, starting it with their top state officeholder and going down through a number of public figures, including Chet Huntley, the television personality, who was then in Los Angeles, we could almost tick off the list as they withdrew along with the Democrats. When Richard Graves announced that he was going to run, Goodwin made the comment, "Well, I would expect to get this job by default about as easily as I could fly to the moon without wings."

Barrett: He never believed that that job would go uncontested. He also made the statement one time that the only genuine draft he knew of he got when he sat in an open doorway. He was pretty much a political realist. But within that perimeter, I don't think there was any logical candidate to take his place in '54. I could go into the same thing as far as '58 is concerned, but that's not where we are now.

Sharp: So he knew that he had to still really run a campaign in 1954?

Barrett: Oh, yes.

The Actual Campaign and Personalities

Sharp: I would also like to give you a list of names of the people we know were actually involved in his '54 campaign. I was wondering if you could tell us just briefly who these people were and what they did.

Barrett: [glancing at names on list] I didn't keep notes at the time, but I think Lloyd Nix was either chairman or treasurer.

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Barrett: Lloyd was more affluent than most of us. We had some pleasant times at his home. I know he was very sincerely and deeply involved, but his relationship with Goodwin Knight was a personal relationship of some years' standing from the time they were legal officers together.

Now, John Synon more properly belongs on your office list as far as the '54 campaign is concerned. He was on our staff.

Jack Warshauer I don't know. Colonel Fuller I don't know.

Sharp: Colonel Fuller we have only a brief description of. He was a fund raiser early on in the campaign, and that's about all we know. We don't even have his full name.

Barrett: See, in the gubernatorial campaign in '54, we begin to get into our lack of labor contacts, within this context, too. Goodwin got the endorsement of the California Federation of Labor. This is not to be confused with the present organization, but the California Congress of Industrial Organization--I don't even recall now where they stood, but he <u>was</u> endorsed by the federation.

Barrett: The key to that, of course, was the principal officer, C. [Cornelius] J. Haggerty, and the members of the executive council; the one physically closest to us, as a matter of fact, and I was talking to him just yesterday about his experience, was Harry Finks. Between Warren, Knight, and Brown--he has attended with a governor eight governor's conferences. He did a lot of the personal liaison between the labor groups as far as fund raising is concerned.

Whitaker & Baxter--part of their public relations service was fund raising. So maybe Colonel Fuller fitted into their--or into the Foutz setup, someplace. Dave Foutz, while he was a pro, he was personally closer. He was less the complete pro that Whitaker & Baxter were.

Sharp: There's a very revealing memo from Dave Foutz to someone in San Francisco about the need to tap the labor vote in Los Angeles. I wanted to ask you, later on, about how Goodwin Knight developed his contact with labor, how he got his right-to-work stance, and how that stance developed.

Barrett: Yes. And you're going to have to talk to somebody in labor about that because I was just on the periphery of it. But it is interesting, not from what I knew immediately of it, but what developed over the years and what I came to know during the administration.

But the Retail Clerks Union #770, Joe Da Silva--I think Joe is now retired--it's the largest retail clerks union, I guess, in the United States; certainly in California. He was very, very good. I was more aware of Joe in the struggle of '58, but he was there in '54.

I know that the labor connections of Knight he had in view of his earlier history is kind of a phenomenon. But it's not as strange as it seems. [laughter]

We've discussed Howard Ahmanson. He was a close friend of the governor personally. An extremely affluent man.

Sharp: He was a fund raiser.

Barrett: Oh, yes. If he couldn't raise them, he could hand them to you.

I traveled around with Howard when we were in the contest in '54 for the vice-chairmanship. One of the things that the Arbuthnot or Nixon people were throwing up was that Howard

Barrett: Ahmanson was a fat cat and had a forty-foot yacht. Howard said, "It's not true. It's only thirty-nine." [laughter] "And if they ask me what my personal worth is," he said, "how can I avoid telling them? It's a matter of record."

Howard was the kind of man that would--he told me one time he carried, I think, $10,000 cash in his inside coat pocket.

Sharp: Oh, my!

Barrett: Just in case an opportunity came up. When that '54 [Republican party] convention was over and we had triumphed, and it was a very tiresome thing for all of us concerned, I asked Howard what he was going to do. He said, "I'm going down to one of the most scenic spots in California and just relax."

I said, "Where is that?"

He said, "I think it's called 'The Devil's Postpile.'" I pride myself on my knowledge of California and California history and geography. I couldn't place it.

He said, "Doug, it's a little place down in (I think it was Kern County) and it's got three of the nicest producing oil wells that you saw in your life. I own half of them."

He got it by the fact that he had that kind of cash available to him and the prospector told him that he could make some ground but he needed backing. Howard provided the ready cash for him at a time--I'm not talking about an era or anything--I'm talking about the time of the week and day when the guy couldn't get his hands on it otherwise. So Howard was a very astute businessman. He started from scratch, maybe even from below scratch, and worked his way through college and that sort of thing.

Ron [A. Ronald] Button I had known for some time before I got into the administration because he was state chairman when I became county chairman in Nevada County. He came up to Grass Valley to appear at a to-do on my behalf--not on my behalf--but because I'd asked him to.

Ron Button is one of those people--he's a conscience politician. He was in it because he believed it was his duty to be in it. He and his wife, Gladys, are two people that I admire very highly. I never had any compunction saying he's one of the real gentlemen I have known in the purest sense of the word. I haven't been in touch with Ron for some time.

Barrett: Well, for instance, I went back to the national governors' conference at Williamsburg and then we ended up in Washington.* I don't recall if Ron was with us, but Mrs. Button was with us. The Buttons and the Knights were close friends. The evening before we were to leave--this was my first trip to Washington--Mrs. Button and I were talking. I had told her I didn't know what to do with the few hours I had. She said, "Let's go have dinner together and then I'll show you Washington as I know it." So we traveled Washington together and then we flew out around midnight.

Sharp: How wonderful!

An Aside on the Governor's Office

Barrett: As a matter of fact, if I can ramble, when the problem of the state treasurer was solved by the resignation of Charlie [Charles] Johnson, the question of a successor was discussed within the governor's office--and differing opinions were encouraged on our staff. I mean, the governor delighted in staff work, inflow and output.

There were two people that were most serious considerations for the appointment of state treasurer. One was Glenn Coolidge, who was assemblyman from Santa Cruz and who had sort of turned up some of the problems in the treasurer's office that I'm not really going to go into, that led to the drive for, well, drive--the effort--to get Charles Johnson out; and Ron Button.

My own view within the staff circle was that Glenn Coolidge was the logical person to be considered. There was nothing negative about my response to Ron Button. I thought that Ron Button, being a lawyer, would be a real addition to a higher court. I didn't cut him down at all. I just felt very strongly that Glenn Coolidge would be a good candidate.

All this is preliminary to the fact that one afternoon after Ron became treasurer, he came by my desk--this is when I was in the Redwood Room--and he asked me if I would come over and be his

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*Mr. Barrett later added that he thought this trip occurred in 1955.

Barrett: assistant in the state treasurer's office. I was rather taken aback and I told him, "Ron, you've got to know. You probably do already, but you've got to know from me that when it came to discussing the decision in staff, I didn't favor your appointment."

Ron said, "I know that. I appreciate your reasons for it. I also understood that you were commending me for an appointment to the bench."

"All right," I said, "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'm flattered by your offer. I would accept it, but you've first got to clear it with the governor. You've got to go to Goodwin's office and ask him if it's all right with him. If it's all right with him, it's all right with me."

I think that's one thing--among the people who were around him longest and most, that Goodwin Knight got--loyalty. People who were in it for their own self-aggrandizement came and went rather rapidly. You certainly had the feeling that he was with you and you were with him.

Ron went in and asked him, and Goodwin had already lost at least one member of his staff because he'd been pressured into appointing Mal [Malcolm E.] Harris as assistant director of the new Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control. I forget who else. Somebody else had become a judge.

Anyway, he was rather emphatic with Ron that he didn't want him raiding his staff. [laughter]

Sharp: Was that the end of it?

Barrett: That was the end of my career in the state treasurer's office.

Sharp: Brief! [laughter]

Barrett: We both accepted it on that basis. It was a totally affirmative experience. Oh, I think the last time I saw Ron was towards the end of my time on the Adult Authority. We were going down south together and he gave me a ride into town.

Once you sort of got into this [Goodwin] Knight family, you never entirely got out of it. It wasn't all that easy. Everybody that was on the staff wasn't in the family, you might say.

Sharp: But those who were, were.

Barrett: But those who were, felt it. I was the one, for instance, who called the state police to tell them Governor Knight had passed away. I actually called the governor's office to call the state police. But I was the one who got the word first. I was in Sacramento.

Now, I've got to admit to a certain personal depth of very strong feeling for Goodwin Knight and for Virginia [Knight]. I do think that Paul Mason probably had a much closer relationship, but I don't think there were many others that did. I had profound admiration and feeling for Virginia--because I had known the first Mrs. Knight*; I had known his strong feelings about marriage and his wife, and I knew what she could have done and didn't do, and what she could do and did.

Filling in Details: How Governor Knight's Office Really Functioned

Duties as Assistant Press Secretary and Other Jobs

Sharp: I hope we can get back to that.

I'd like to move on now and ask you about some of your other administrative secretarial duties besides being assistant press secretary. Before we do that, if you could, just as briefly as you can, summarize what you did as assistant press secretary.

Barrett: Usually drafted letters, program forwards. One of my primary duties was what you might call supervision of the weekly press conferences--maybe it was twice a week. But at any rate, the press conference in the governor's office was our responsibility, or mine.

I sat in on them, I summarized the questions, I prepared a staff briefing on what had gone on in the press conference if there were special press inquiries--either the press secretary

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*Goodwin Knight's first wife, Arvilla Cooley Knight, died in 1952, when Knight was lieutenant governor.

Barrett: or I handled them. Now, the title, assistant press secretary, didn't stick with me very long because when the shakeup came and Bob Alderman left and Newt Stearns became executive secretary, Tom Bright became press secretary; my title became secretary to the governor and that's where it remained from then on, though my duties moved around.

But I did stay in the press section, acknowledging Tom [Bright] as the press secretary. If anybody implies that I held a superior attitude or position towards Tom Bright, that's another one, too, because Tom and I worked very well together. I can't say as much for Newt and I. We did have our differences, but I survived.

You know, the governor's got a lot of statements, proclamations, and I did occasional speech drafts and that sort of thing.

Sharp: And this was both during the campaign and then--

Barrett: Oh, all through the administration [1953-1958].

Sharp: You had told me that you had acted as a travel secretary--

Barrett: Briefly. What I told you was I had done everything except clemency! [laughter]

Sharp: Let me just tell you some of what I have found out and then we'll go back through and discuss it. I know that you had a letter-writing function for Goodwin Knight in 1954 and that's what you have described.

You did act as travel secretary. But also I know that in late 1956 and late '57, you did have some kind of political function for Goodwin Knight, because you traveled to Inyo and Imperial and San Diego Counties and spoke with Republican county chairmen.

Barrett: And Republican legislators.

Sharp: Why did you do that?

Barrett: The easiest thing for me to do is try to give you a picture of where I sat in the staff. I had never been in an organization where staff was so literally accepted. We would deal with what we could individually and in our separate functions during the working day while the door was open to the public.

If we had problems that transcended in our own desk, we didn't go scattering them around. The governor at the close of the day quite often, particularly before he was married, would throw his switch on all our squawk boxes and called for what he called skull practice.

Barrett: We would all come into the inner office and sometimes we would be there into the wee hours of the night. He gave a couple of parties at the Mansion for the staff wives in the interest of domestic harmony. [laughter]

For instance, when I was still assistant press secretary, I worked with Paul Mason on briefing the bill files, the legislative bill files.

These travels of mine down south [southern California] in calling on Republican chairmen were more or less coincidental to my calling on newly elected legislators--Democrat and Republican--before the session started, in many cases, and getting acquainted with them on their home ground.

Some of the functions I had when I went there I still had when I left, and I still had a key to the door until--well, I was in the room when Governor Knight and Governor [Edmund G., Sr., "Pat"] Brown exchanged their views, and actually exchanged a judgeship before Governor Brown went upstairs to take his oath of office.

I was there on the last great day of the united brotherhood. By then, I had been on the Youth Authority for eight or nine months, but I still functioned within the governor's office over and above my duties on the Youth Authority. It was a personal thing. I never did completely get out of the letter-drafting function.

I did do speeches while I was in the press office. Let's see, what dates did you give me on that? '56, '57?

Sharp: December '56 and October '57; those are the two dates that I found. There are probably more.

Barrett: December '56. [musingly]

Sharp: I wondered what--

Barrett: I don't even know the significance of that span of time.

Sharp: What about, of course, after the Republican national convention which was held in San Francisco? I perhaps wondered if those were post-convention trips for some reason and you were carrying Governor Knight's messages.

Barrett: The national convention in '56?

Sharp: Yes.

Barrett: I don't know how I could have been much farther from the vortex of Republican politics after that until '58 rolled around.

You see, politically, there were two groups. There were the Knight committee people from '54 and then there were the official Republican organizations. Wherever I sat in the governor's office, because so many of these were in rural areas, I had established a rapport or liaison or whatever you want to call it, with both of these groups.

Now, it seems to me that during this period, I inherited what we referred to as the big black book. This is a book that is maintained for the governor's office by the attorney general and lists all of those positions which are appointive by the governor, along with the terms and the incumbents and their expiration of terms. I spent many months on that and I would consult with the Knight chairmen, with the county party chairmen, and with anybody else in the community that the governor wanted consulted, and put that together too.

Sharp: I did do some research and found that you had worked with Newton Stearns on some research on appointments to the fair boards and to the municipal courts in 1958. Did those appointments come out of this big black book or--

Barrett: Oh, yes.

Sharp: --did you also work on higher level appointments?

Barrett: The job was referred to loosely in the staff as the appointment secretary. Mrs. [Phyllis] Schaefer was my secretary. She and I worked together on this. Newt Stearns worked longer than just '58. In fact, I would say, by '58 he was pretty well out of it.

The black book and the functions that went with it took in everything that the governor appointed, from [state] supreme court justice down to county fair board and the advisory board on Spanish-American war veterans--and we had such a board. We cleaned out the old fish pond and exposed the monument to the Spanish war veteran in Capitol Park.

But all of those things required attention. None of the files was ever dead. If somebody had ever been recommended for or applied to be appointed to a position, that name was in that file, so that if they were not appointed this time--they were maybe to some other position if the name really stuck, or to some subsequent development in that position, like on the Los Angeles superior court.

Barrett: If Goodwin would buzz me in and say, "Bring me the Los Angeles superior court file," I'd have to empty two file cases and bring them in and pile them all over his desk.

Sharp: Did you make selective judgments about these people before Governor Knight saw a shorter list of possible appointees to the position?

Barrett: I think it was a cooperative situation. I would summarize availability. Who was available and who was recommending them. Particularly on court appointments, he gave this his close personal attention.

Sharp: Because he had been a judge himself?

Barrett: Because he had been a judge and also because he believed that the ongoing reputation of an administration was more clearly reflected in its judicial appointments than maybe any other type of appointment he could make.

Sharp: Did you also view the files on some of the most spectacular appointments, say, as heads of agencies?

Barrett: If it came up, yes. Yes, we would. Here again, you get into the staff situation. The governor would get these files, he would get whoever was handling that book, and I didn't handle it all through all of the administration. There were others.

There was a format, you know. His great line was, "Give me the last line first. Don't give me a pile like that. Tell me what it says."

Quite frequently, unless he was absolutely set in his mind that there was only one and none other [person for the position], he would fill it out from staff. We would discuss the advantages and disadvantages. On judgeships, in my particular geographical area, coming from the mountains and what was then the second congressional district, there were a lot of small counties up there--he would put quite a bit of weight, without giving me the decision, on how I saw it and what I found in the community because he felt I knew the community.

He deferred to no one in Los Angeles. We had a sort of problem with the State Athletic Commission and he was very anxious to upgrade at least the reputation. I don't sit in judgment on anybody's personal qualities, but he wanted to get an M.D. on it. I suggested that he contact the man that had been his county chairman in Sacramento, Dr. Dan Kilroy.

Barrett: So Knight did. He was looking for suggestions and Dr. Kilroy indicated a latent interest in the work of the Athletic Commission, so he was appointed himself.

Sharp: That did it?

Barrett: Yes. [laughter]

So it was not an exact science, by any means, but it was done with a great deal of organization and conscientiousness.

Assisting Paul Mason: The ABC and Other Issues

Sharp: Let's move on now and talk about the legislative secretary position that Paul Mason had. You said that you assisted him.

Some of the big issues for this administration were highway construction, the beginnings of a water plan, as well as the development of the ABC (the Alcoholic Beverage Commission), and the role of the oil companies in economic development in California.

We know that Paul Mason was a heavy supporter of Proposition 3 in 1954, which concerned the development of the ABC. I was wondering how this got through the legislature and if you worked with Mr. Mason in trying to convince the legislature of the need for it.

Barrett: I didn't really get into that act until it was down to the slugging area, you might say. Obviously, and this was only one of several what you might call administrative reforms that the governor sought when he was in office.

He [Governor Knight] believed in one step at a time. He didn't want to take the whole state government and shake it down all at once. So, if something cropped up, he would say, let's take care of that; then we'll take another one, then we'll take another one. So we actually--even going beyond '58, we had plans for what we thought was improving services to the public.

Barrett: In fact, one of his first acts was to take Bill Burkett, who had investigated the Department of Employment, and make him director, simply because Burkett had some criticisms and so forth in his report to the legislature on the Department of Employment.*

Whether it went legislative or administrative, a constant theme in the administration was, how can we do things better than we're doing them?

So getting back to the ABC, when we came into it--when I came into it--we just completed the struggle with the Board of Equalization and Bill [William] Bonelli. The governor was seeking an administrator for the department. He wanted somebody beyond question and somebody that he could rely on, so he lit upon the then-state director of Selective Service, Colonel Kenneth Leitch.

An odd coincidence! I knew Colonel Leitch's brother very well because he was manager of the telephone company in Truckee.

Bud Leitch thought about it for quite a while, and in the meantime, Governor Knight had given him his choice for the deputy director, who was now [Mal] Harris, or the governor's research secretary. Mal functioned as director until Leitch decided his own health wouldn't permit him to take on the obviously herculean task of putting the administration of state liquor licenses back on track. We went on for the search for talent for director.

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Barrett: Aside from the organization of the Department of ABC, Alcoholic Beverage Control, the earliest fight, I was too much of an amateur at that point in time to be very deep into it.

Sharp: What were some of the issues, then, that you did help Mr. Mason with in the legislature?

Barrett: As I say, mainly, it was a matter of my taking away from him a lot of the detail work that he had. We did have the water situation; we had a press and legislative tour of the great flood in '53; the Feather River Project preliminaries. But I couldn't

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*See the donated tapes collection at the Regional Oral History Office for an interview with Mr. William Burkett.

Barrett: even pretend to say that I was significant in direct relationships with the legislature so much as Paul [Mason] and I working together on developing the material that did go upstairs.

Paul is a pre-eminent parliamentarian. He was parliamentarian of the state senate. He wrote the book.* In just this recent session in the legislature, he just dropped into the gallery before his son-in-law became an assemblyman. He was an unpaid lobbyist for the retired state employees and was recognized in the senate as the man who wrote the book that they run by.

I was more or less the anchorman in the office, you might say, while Paul was upstairs.

Filling in as Research and Travel Secretaries

Sharp: Was the fact that you held so many different posts within the governor's office a source of friction within the office?

Barrett: No, I don't think so. I came back from one of those southern California trips where I was endeavoring to meet the new legislators before they came to Sacramento to take their jobs. Whether it was Democrat or Republican, the door was open.

I came into the office, and just by coincidence most of the staff was off, out with the governor; they weren't off work. Tom Bright, who was--I forget--at that point in time, was acting press secretary or acting as executive secretary.

He said, "You're the research secretary." My position at that point in time within the framework--my title was simply secretary, so they didn't have to change the card.

But I said, "I just got back from a legislative trip. When does it start?"

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*Here Mr. Barrett refers to Paul Mason's Manual of Legislative Procedure for State Legislatures and other Legislative Bodies, published by the California State Printing Office in Sacramento in 1937.

Barrett: He said, "It started yesterday. Pat Martin quit." This was just before the session.

So I went in and pulled the material together for the governor's message to the legislature and then, for some months--I forget how many--until I moved over to take over the appointment book, I kept track of those places where he would have to make speeches and then develop material for him to have available at that point in time. And served as research secretary.

I served as travel secretary, only in hiatus, either between Dick [Richard A.] McKinney and Verne Tobin, or while they were out. If Dick was traveling with the governor, I would go into his office. I make myself sound like a bear for work--but I would go into his office. He had three women working for him. I would take the phone calls and make the arrangements for future physical appearances for the governor elsewhere while Dick was off traveling with him.

For instance, in October 1976, my youngest daughter was married over in Marin County. Four of these people I'm talking about and their wives were at the wedding. So, I would say, at least, there was a group of us that the only way you could pry one of us out of the group was to demonstrate his lack of loyalty to the governor himself.

In fact, we had an occasion to put it to the test and we agreed we had no friends in the staff. We hoped that we would develop friendships that would go beyond it. But we each only had one friend on the staff and that was the governor himself. Any of the rest of us, we were expendable on that basis.

It made for very fast relationships. The last family vacation that I had with my wife and four daughters--that's before the girls began going their separate ways--we spent about three days down at the Knights [Governor and Mrs. Virginia] in Los Angeles before we went on to the Grand Canyon.

Last Sunday we were up at a reception for Joe Babich's daughter--her wedding--and we keep in touch with the [Richard] McKinneys quite regularly.

I think about two days ago, my wife was talking to Blanche Mason on the phone because she [Blanche Mason] had just recently broken a rib. All these things--it goes beyond government and goes beyond politics.

Additional Notes on Skull Practice##

Barrett: Now, the clemency secretary, all day long, dealt with legal questions and questions of executive clemency. But there's always an overlap and we always had a file--I referred to mine as the governor's file. When we were buzzed in, and it wasn't every night, but we had regular staff meetings, governor or no. There was a small reception room in addition to the main one.

We had weekly staff meetings that would come before eight o'clock in the morning and go for about an hour. And we would exchange views.

But also, if these problems came up, we would go in and bounce them off the governor and bounce them off one another. The governor was a great one for devil's advocate sort of thing. He would take the view that he might not espouse at all. I can't remember if he debated in college.

He would even get to the point of what might appear to somebody that wasn't aware of the process, to be almost anger or antagonism, to get you to bring out a view that he might have agreed with from the beginning. If we didn't know what one another were doing, we would question it because if we ran the curtain up once in a while in the department store window, changed the display, we never did it internally.

If there was ever a feeling that somebody inside the group was holding something back, we'd figure they were holding it back for some other reason than the good of the cause and we would inquire into it.

Sharp: Can you give me an example of a specific topic that you discussed in skull practice that each of you would have different ideas on? A certain policy that was being made about education, or the water plan, or something like that?

Barrett: We did have differences on educational approaches. It was more putting everything into the pot and seeing what we have here. As I say, the one example, and it was episodic, was the "shall-I-go-to-Cortina or not?" There were debatable differences on that, and on this issue where I had quite strong difference of opinion than the campaign manager's. That was over a speech.

We had a divergence of opinion, but we never got to the point where we couldn't agree that the other person had a point.

Barrett: Sometimes the problems we would bring from our own desks would be problems that we had no answer to, that we ourselves couldn't even suggest to the governor what should be, and maybe somebody on the staff who ordinarily would not be related to that question would have some peculiar background that would qualify them to put into it.

The whole question of executive clemency and the cases involved there caused a great deal of trauma in the governor's office and I don't think that it necessarily made for disagreement. The governor would discuss the Caryl Chessman case both in staff and with us individually.

I recall a long walk through the garden--east of the capitol--where he discussed this with great concern. Strange thing, but he was not opposed to capital punishment. I don't know whether there's anybody reading papers, but he was not an opponent to it, yet the diligence with which he attacked the files prior to making decisions on this would just leave him limp, both him and his clemency secretary--the one that I knew best.

Sharp: And that was Judge Babich?

Barrett: Babich, yes.

Relationships Within the Governor's Office##

Sharp: Why did that happen, that there became such a close network? Was it because of the pressures of the governor's office? Or just the kind of person that Goodwin Knight was?

Barrett: I think both went into it. But Goodwin Knight was one of the best people that I could conceive of working for. If you worked for him and with him, you probably felt that you worked three years in one. But there was nothing that you were asked to do that you felt was trivial or beneath your dignity to do.

He had what he referred to as a department store window concept of running his office. Now, once in a while, you have to run the curtain up to change the display in the department store window. Otherwise, he wanted an open administration.

Characteristic was his handling of the [Governor's] Mansion--the New Year's open house. "This is our home," he thought. He didn't have the disdain for it, for instance, that Governor Ronald Reagan had.

Barrett: There's an interesting thing about his early weeks as governor [in 1953] in connection with the [Governor's] Mansion. He stayed at the Hotel Senator [in Sacramento] because he had told Mrs. [Earl] Warren that she could take all the time that she required to move out, to get her stuff organized. He told her: Don't feel rushed.

This was a gentlemanly and a courteous and typical thing for him to do, but it also went back to an earlier visit to the house.

He told me once that during the entire time that he served as Warren's lieutenant governor, he was never in the [Governor's] Mansion. He never went to the Mansion. Warren had a large family. He maintained it as a private home and had his guests at his selection. And Warren and Knight weren't personally that close. Knight didn't even go over while Mrs. Warren was moving out. He didn't go until after she left.

Knight was still single. He was a widower. He had remembered the Mansion from the time that Frank Merriam was governor. Frank Merriam, in the first place, had the interior quite dark at that point in time. Merriam was himself single or widowed. Two other people besides Knight and Merriam, whose names escape me and wouldn't be repeated if I did remember them, were playing cards in one of the rooms. The rest of the place was dark. Its dreariness on that one visit affected Goodwin's memory. He was a very sensitive man. He responded physically to some things.

When he got into the Mansion, he was delighted. He held press parties. He would invite the press. As I said, he had at least two or three what he called staff wives' parties. At the press parties, the entire staff and their wives joined him as hosts and hostesses.

Then when the second Mrs. Knight came into the picture, I don't recall clearly, but I think we did hold an open house even before she came.* But when she came, she got right into the spirit of things. She redid the kitchen in what she called Danish blue and copper. They were charivaried when they returned to the Mansion by E. Clampus Vitus from Placerville, and she was so enthusiastic, she was getting ready to go downstairs. The governor offered to break both her legs if she stirred one step out of the room; he said he'd take care of it.

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*Governor Knight was married on 2 August 1954 to Virginia Carlson.

Barrett: She wasn't acquainted with the Clampus. She didn't know who they were or what they were. And she was very honored that they came up at three o'clock in the morning with a steam calliope. But never trust a Clamper at three o'clock in the morning! [laughter]

Sharp: Sounds like good advice!

Additional Contrasts Between Earl Warren and Goodwin Knight##

Sharp: Many people have said that Goodwin Knight wanted to follow in Earl Warren's footsteps. I was wondering what you thought of that statement.

Barrett: You mean he wanted to go to the [U.S.] Supreme Court?

Sharp: No, in terms of policies and how Governor Warren had administered California, that Goodwin Knight, when he became governor, wanted to do things in the same style and carry out the same policies that Governor Warren had. I was wondering what you thought.

Barrett: Style, I would question. Policies--in spite of some of his personal differences--and socially, they were different from one another. I'd say that Goodwin saw his administration as an evolution out of and a continuation of the Warren administration. I think he saw a consistent progression rather than a 180-degree turn.

As far as his personal style and administration, I think Warren and Knight were vastly different and I don't think he made any effort to be Earl Warren in the corner office because Earl Warren was inclined to be autocratic about his role as governor and about his role as an individual.

If Goodwin Knight was invited someplace as governor, he was quite insistent that his place as governor be exactly where it should be and he would not participate unless it was.

If he was invited as Goodwin Knight, he could sit at the back of the room. He didn't care. If it was a ceremonial thing, a black-tie affair, that was something else. In other words, he had a way in his mind, of separating Goodwin Knight from the governor of California. If he felt that the person that had invited him to this occasion had invited him as governor, and

Barrett: would never have invited him as Judge Knight or as Lieutenant Governor Knight, he said, "I'm going to sit precisely where the governor of California should sit, or I won't sit there. I won't even come into the room."

But if it was with a bunch of people who, even if they had only known him after he became governor, if it was a social one-to-one thing--he'd come and he'd take any place at the table.

I know one occasion where--[Richard] McKinney told me about it--at least, it goes as hearsay--[McKinney and Knight] had mixed up on the calendar and they wound up in a town ahead of time. Of course, no band showed up--nothing. It wasn't too far from Sacramento.

Dick, who had worked with Warren, said if that happened with him and Warren, he [Dick McKinney] would have been out. With Goodwin, he went and called on the local editor, made a couple of other local contacts, piled back into the car, went back to the capital, and back up the next day. You know--everybody makes mistakes.

In fact, I was trying to think of Knight's drivers. It kept sticking in my mind that there was at least one more. Now, Warren's drivers turned over quite strongly, or quite frequently. Knight's drivers turned over very slowly and quite reluctantly, sometimes, because outside of Pat Patterson and some of the state police as opposed to the [Department of] Highway Patrol, the governor's drivers were assigned from the [Department of] Highway Patrol. Their duties with the governor were such that, one, it interfered with their upward mobility in the patrol and, two, it piled up overtime and vacation time so that they tended to leave only when they had so much overtime and time off that they could never pick it up.

Charlie Worrell, who was with Knight when he was lieutenant governor, drove him in southern California mostly, though he did come up north with him when they were driving. Charlie Worrell and there was Frank Snider and Bill Kramer. Bill is still with the Department of Highway Patrol and he's got to be at least deputy chief or inspector by now.

It was a personal relationship between the governor and his drivers. We kind of considered them as members of the staff just as we did the crew of the plane.

In fact, Verne Tobin came onto the staff from the crew of the plane. He became travel secretary when Dick McKinney left. Verne Tobin had been co-pilot of The Grizzly. I think he's retired and living in Sacramento somewhere. He retired as a brigadier general in the National Guard.

Barrett: There were very thin lines of division among us--the change of duty--we tended to move around as a group more than one person off by himself.

Sharp: Was that because Goodwin Knight felt comfortable working with you--meaning you as a collective group of people?

Barrett: Yes.

Sharp: He thought that you would do any duty that he assigned to you well? Or he trusted your judgment?

Barrett: I think Goodwin was a good administrator in that he would delegate broad responsibility and give you a chance to make a couple of mistakes in it, even. If you failed consistently or if your integrity became compromised, then you would probably leave rather rapidly and silently.

But aside from that, he really encouraged a common resolution of differences on a face-to-face basis. One of my most dramatic stories was the matter of the Winter Olympics in 1956. His trip had been proposed to him by his campaign people, to go to Cortina, to what they called save the Olympics. We argued in skull practice for, oh, two and a half days as to whether the governor should go to Cortina, [Italy] and he and I were standing toe to toe, arguing. In fact, there were members of the staff who thought I was going to be fired on the spot. In the end, the governor did what I thought he should do, and that was stay home and not go to Cortina, because we could do nothing but lose and had nothing to gain. I knew things about him personally. I didn't think I was in jeopardy at that point.

Three times during the administration, I offered him my resignation and he refused it. The first time was when Bob Alderman left and it was not an issue of work. I tend to get colds and sick on weekends and go to work on Monday. The first day since I had been there, I stayed home because my wife wasn't feeling well. There was a press conference that day and that was the day that Bob Alderman resigned. There were people in the press section, particularly those that represented the country press. There was a great deal of question about Bob Alderman's resignation, and I'm not going to try to resolve it for you in these interviews because I was close to Bob and Bob was close to the governor. Now, Bob's primary reason [for leaving] was a bad back and I'm going to leave it at that.

Barrett: Since I wasn't there, and this was the first conference since I'd come that I wasn't there, the press had thought I had gone too with Bob. The governor said, "No. Doug's still on the payroll. He's just not here today."

Well, when I came in--this was a surprise to me; this whole thing came up overnight as far as I was concerned--but it didn't come up overnight. Paul Mason, Stearns, the governor, and Bob Alderman were all into it, but I wasn't.

So when I found out what had happened, and having some of these questions arise, and having met the governor through Bob Alderman, he and I went for a walk in the park. He was great for doing that. He'd done that when he was lieutenant governor. He'd take a visitor out and sit on a bench in the park to discuss his business with him.

He and I were walking through the park because I'd asked him to. I didn't want anybody else in the act. I said, "Look, I came through Bob Alderman. I haven't been here very long. I've still got a base to go back to. If it's a matter of your confidence in me or him, you can have my resignation."

I'd already called Bob and told him, and asked him what it was all about. He had said, "It's personal between me and the governor. It has nothing to do with you."

So I left it to the governor, then, to determine whether I should remain on the staff or not. I said, "I'll go without waves."

Then he said, "No. You're not involved and I want you to stay."

It happened one other time, then, towards the end of the administration within the--what I consider the sad days of '58. I had a strong difference of opinion on an issue of educational policy with the campaign directors in San Francisco and it had gotten back to the governor through [Newton] Stearns, who had taken a leave of absence to work with Whitaker and Baxter.*

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*Whitaker and Baxter refers to the political campaign management and public relations firm owned by Clem Whitaker and Leone Baxter.

Barrett: I went in to the governor and said, "This is the way it happened and this is my position on it. Because you're in the situation you're in, I think you're entitled to as much quietude, or whatever you want to call it, in the last months of your administration as you can have. So, if you want to work with Whitaker and Baxter, I'll be happy to submit my resignation because I don't want to be the source of strife here."

And again, he turned me down. He said, "I want you to stay."

That was sort of indicative of our relationship, too.

Sharp: Sure sounds like it, yes.

Barrett: You see, I developed a closer personal feeling for him than anything else.

Sharp: It's very interesting to do these interviews and not have met Governor Knight, because I get the same sense from almost everybody that I talk to of his warmth, his genuineness, his desire to work things out with people, and his fairness.

Barrett: I think that response would probably amaze him.

Other Fond Memories##

Barrett: You know, we had the same coloration. Virginia [Knight], more than once, commented on sort of a father-son physical thing--blond, blue-eyed, large face, that sort of thing.

The staff consistently during the administration celebrated his birthday. I don't mean the whole staff. I mean the policy-level staff, like myself and Judge Joseph Babich, whoever else was there--Paul Mason--and we'd take the governor out to lunch. It was an occasion.

Goodwin and I would walk back to the capitol together sometimes. We'd scatter out along the street, and we'd make kind of a line. It was that kind of a gang. We'd talk about personal responses to things.

I think I discussed with you briefly Mrs. Knight's role [in Governor Knight's political life] and some of the misunderstandings concerning it. Coming back from one of these birthday celebrations--his birthday was the ninth of December--we were walking

Barrett: back from Antonino's, which is now no longer there. I think the building is Santa Barbara Savings now. It was an old Victorian mansion that was a rather nice place to eat. We were talking about decisions and decision-making.

He had a phenomenal record as a judge on not being reversed. I don't know what the statistics are, but they are pretty good. He'd made a lot of decisions, both as governor and as judge. He was counseling me on, don't look back on your decision sort of thing. He said, "I've only made one decision that I regretted. I have made mistakes. I have made bad decisions. But I've gone on from there."

This story developed in the conversation about when Mrs. Knight died, the first Mrs. Knight, in 1952. Mrs. Knight's mother, a semi-invalid, had lived with them for many, many years. Then she passed away. Goodwin had promised his wife that they would go to Europe. So they went to Europe and had a delightful trip. I knew him at this time. I knew him when they left.

And Warren was a candidate for vice-president.

They came back from their trip and Goodwin was sort of acting governor, off and on in California. He wasn't too active politically. He was popular as a Republican speaker back in what I referred to as the coal belt--West Virginia, Pennsylvania, southern Ohio, through there.

The [Republican] national committee came at him to go back there and campaign for the Dewey-Warren ticket. He was reluctant to do it because he didn't like to get that far away from home. He was a great family man. They [the committee] finally prevailed on him to go. And he made the decision, in other words, to go to southern Ohio. He flew in and landed, and was greeted with the news that his wife had died. That was his decision of regret.

So when he married Virginia, if he was invited anyplace, she went and she was apparent with him. She couldn't have avoided it if she wanted to. She put on her best Paramount Studio smile and sat there like a good little soldier. [laughter] And took a lot of flack because she was a younger woman. She was a good-looking woman. Although I don't know whether she ever played a role or not, she'd been under contract to Paramount.

Sharp: She's a beautiful woman.

Barrett: Oh, she is.

Barrett: The last time I saw her was at Stanford at the dedication of the papers.* Some of mine were there, Knight buttons, etc.

But she was a real trooper. She'd be bone tired. That was one of my aces on the Cortina discussion because it was going to be a whirlwind, turn-around trip to go before Olympic committee in Cortina, Italy. I knew two things about Goodwin Knight that the rest of them hadn't really taken into account.

One, that he wasn't going to go without her and the state wasn't going to pay for her to go and, two, he hated to get his feet cold! [laughter] He was born in Utah.

Sharp: He would there!

Barrett: Right! But he had to be there! [laughter] Goodwin was used to the extreme cold. We made quite a few trips up to Idaho because Governor Knight was very close to Governor Robert Smylie. He would go up and speak to the All-Idaho Congress, and he always took me along because I was native up there.

I remember once we were in the middle of a winter--I forget what month it was--and we stepped out--I think it was the Idanha Hotel. It was a clear, brisk night and Mrs. Knight took a deep breath. She was such an enthusiastic person. She took a big, deep breath, took another, and she said, "Isn't that invigorating!" The governor said, "You take one more of those, Virginia, it'll be pneumonia!" She didn't realize the danger of deep breathing in sub-zero cold.

Sharp: Your reminiscences are so crucial to us because we can only interview everybody instead of Goodwin Knight, now. So for you to tell us about his office and how that worked, as well as to tell us about him as a man and your relationship with him, that's extremely valuable.

[tape off briefly during pause]

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*Mrs. Virginia Knight donated Goodwin Knight's papers to Stanford University in 1975. Governor Knight had graduated from Stanford in 1919.

IV LABOR AND GOODWIN KNIGHT: 1954, 1956, 1958*

Barrett: If you're going to get into the labor thing, Harry Finks was the closest. The attrition of time--I know Al Gruhn, our president of the California Labor Federation, was on the executive council at that time. So was M.R. Callahan, but the person who was really closest was Harry.

Sharp: We would, I think, definitely like to interview Mr. Finks.

Barrett: I think you should. Harry would make an interesting interview if you are a patient interviewer and are willing to take an occasional hit. Harry's personal education ended at the fifth grade. He was born, as he says, in Golden Gate Park, because he was an earthquake baby.

I've seen his birth certificate. In fact, I had to go out and get it and I found one of the few people who knew all the circumstances. He was born in a compound of the painters union, so he was totally born in the labor movement, and he was attended, not by a midwife, but by a woman M.D., which was very unusual for nineteen aught six.

Sharp: Very!

Barrett: Harry is very short sometimes and very blunt, but he was there the whole show.

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*See the Appendix for a pamphlet printed by the AF of L committee for supporting Knight for governor in 1954.

Sharp: I was wondering if, just for the record, you could tell us about his role in the 1956 campaign.

Barrett: Harry's?

Sharp: Yes.

Barrett: I prefer to let you get it from him. Harry was a Republican. Nineteen fifty-eight drove a lot of substantial labor Republicans into the Democratic party, but that's another story. Harry was one of the Knight delegates [to the 1956 Republican national convention]. Then you have some idea, although there are some holes in it, on the division of the delegation in '56.

Harry was one of those who did not vote on the question of the vice-presidency. His alternate cast a vote. He and I kidded about that; we were discussing it just the other day. The story was in the press at the time. The press was all over the Knight people at that stage of the convention. Harry left the floor and the press reminded him the delegates were about to vote for the vice-presidential nominee. He said, "I'm going to get a drink."

They said, "Are you going to get back in time for the roll call?" He said, "I'm very thirsty," and he never made it back. [laughter]

One of the other delegates voted for Joe Smith or whatever the alternative was to Nixon.

Harry [Finks] was there. As I say, he attended eight governors' conferences with three different governors.

Sharp: Did Mr. Finks think that labor in California would support Goodwin Knight for vice-president in 1956, and that's why he suggested that Governor Knight put his name forward? Or was he speaking more for himself?

Barrett: I would say that Harry very seldom spoke solely for himself.

Sharp: Now, I know that the right-to-work issue didn't really come up until '58.

Barrett: No, it came up in '54. It came up in '54 at the interview.

Sharp: What interview?

Barrett: The process by which the state AFL-CIO--then the state AF of L--comes to their endorsement--everybody assumes that it's like last year's (1978). They presuppose that they would endorse [Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr.] Brown and [Mervyn] Dymally. Not so.

The executive council has interviews of all people who are serious contenders for a statewide office. They [the executive council] invite them if they want to come and then they are interviewed in closed session on issues that are close to them. This is a body that consists of thirty-seven men and women at this point in time.

They make a report to a convention which we refer to now as pre-primary convention, and I suppose we did then. Then the convention makes the endorsement of the organization.* So there's an interviewing process, there's a recommendation process, and some of these recommendations are not accepted on the floor, although they generally are because of the interviewing body.

So it was during the interviewing in '54 that, I think--I wasn't there; I only know what I hear from others--that Knight brought up the issue of right-to-work, or it was brought up and he emphatically made his statement at that point, and actually surprised some of the interviewers because what he said was more voluntary than anything else.

Sharp: Did they expect that because he was a Republican he automatically supported right-to-work?

Barrett: I don't know what their expectation was. There were some who themselves were Republicans. I don't think in '54 they would have automatically assumed that a Republican would be, because there was enough room in the Republican party for that in 1954 under the old cross-filing system.

For instance, Lieutenant Governor [Harold J., "Butch"] Powers had the same position at that point in time and also had the support of labor.

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*Mr. Barrett later explained that the convention delegates define the organizational position, following recommendation by the executive council.

Sharp: So Knight's saying that he would not support right-to-work enabled him to get a certain amount of labor support for '54 and the '54 campaign.

Barrett: It helped him. It helped him.

Sharp: And he built on that through his administration?

Barrett: He had a consistently pro-organized-labor position. His deputy director for the Department of Employment came from the ranks of labor. Jimmy Hicks from Sacramento, who is dead, was a former assemblyman. He was the editor of the Union Labor Bulletin. So it was not inconsistent of Goodwin Knight to have taken that position.

I've since gotten on the inside of this labor interviewing process because I'm Jack [John] Henning's administrative assistant [in the California Labor Federation].

The candidate--whether you come in with a presupposition of opposition or not, the candidate gets to make his first pitch. He gets to say what he wants to say and the interview is wide open. He can make any response as long as he's willing to have the response responded to. It's a free exchange of views.

Who is the chief of police of Los Angeles that ran for governor? His name is Ed Davis. He ran against [Evelle] Younger and Ken Maddy and so forth in 1978.* He was the extreme right end of the spectrum.

Sharp: I can see it.

Barrett: He's a white-haired older man. He came to the interview and he stated his position quite frankly. The committee, which is also the executive council, gave him a courteous reception. They aired differences of opinion with him. I would suspect from what I hear, and it's not based on firsthand knowledge or anything else, that much of what Goodwin Knight said in '54 on right-to-work was voluntary.

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*In the June primary in 1978, Ed Davis rivalled Evelle Younger, Ken Maddy, and Pete Wilson for the Republican nomination for governor of California.

Barrett: As to '58, I don't think it's any secret that right-to-work cost him the governorship. But he would not back down. Because he would not back down or modify his position on right-to-work, was what cost him.

Sharp: The whole story about 1958 and the "Big Switch" is a terribly complicated network. Everybody seems to have their own truth about what really cost him the governorship.

Barrett: As long as you say little t, why, I'll go along with it, but there's only one big T. [laughter]

Sharp: In our next interview, we'll get to the big T.

Barrett: No, no. That big T goes beyond politics.

Don [Donald] Doyle and Tom [Thomas] Caldecott, unwittingly, both of these people are involved in 1958 and the governor's final decision to do what he did. There's another one, an assembly person, who was in this area at that time, and who we regarded as a good friend.

See, the governor had very good relationships with his legislature. He was not adamant except in broad policy. He worked within the legislative process because he'd been in. So he had a lot of friends there. Luther Lincoln, otherwise known as "Abe" Lincoln.

Sharp: I believe we interviewed Lincoln for the Warren project.

Barrett: Yes. Probably did. He was in the legislature then. He represented Contra Costa County at the time. But he came to the [assembly] speakership during the Knight administration.* There was southern California opposition to Lincoln, and Goodwin Knight let it be clearly known that his choice for speaker was "Abe" Lincoln, because he worked very well with Don [Donald] Doyle and Tom [Thomas] Caldecott. There's a lobbyist who was a former superior court judge in Sacramento by the name Gordon Fleury. He was in the assembly.

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*Luther Lincoln was speaker of the assembly from 1955 through 1958.

Barrett: See, what we're talking about here was Caldecott, Fleury, and Cap [Caspar] Weinberger, three people who were very important on [the assembly] Ways and Means. Caldecott was chairman. The governor, because he maintained a good relationship with the speaker, was able to at least have affirmative input to who was going to be the principal push on the budget, which was the chairman of Ways and Means.

V POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS SURROUNDING THE 1956 REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION

[Interview 2: April 27, 1979]##

The Question of Support for Governor Knight as a Possible Vice-Presidential Candidate

Sharp: As I said on the phone, I wanted to start with the 1956 Republican national convention. One of the first general questions is just how support developed for Governor [Goodwin] Knight for the vice-presidential nomination at the convention.

Barrett: As I told you on the phone, I wasn't too aware of a great deal of activity within our circle of his seeking this. I think it probably generated from President [Dwight] Eisenhower's heart attack and the uncertainty of what were going to be the results of that. Was the president going to seek re-election?

If he was not, Governor Knight had a pretty fixed goal of heading off [Richard] Nixon. There was talk of his putting up a separate delegation in the Republican primary to challenge Nixon, because it was obvious if Eisenhower didn't go, Nixon would.

The president recovered from his heart attack. As a matter of fact, Governor Knight made a trip back because the filing time was coming close and no word had come from the president as to what his intentions were. So, as I recall, the governor either called and had a talk or went back to Gettysburg. It was there that he heard privately what the rest of the world heard publicly a short time later, that the president intended to run for re-election. He [Eisenhower] was convinced--I think the phrase that was bandied about was--there'd be millions of Americans heartbroken if he [Eisenhower] didn't.

Barrett: At that time, the decision was made to recognize the separate interests within the Republican party [that] centered around Nixon, Knight, and [William] Knowland and divide the delegation three ways and have a single delegation after the president decided he would be a candidate. And this was done.

Now, what I have to say about derailing Nixon as vice-president is largely a matter of speculation and impressions. The impression I got was that Knight was encouraged to, at least let his name be used as a focal point from inside the White House. I could tell you even who I think it was, but I don't think that would be fair because it would be purely speculation.*

And this persisted actually until the renomination of the president had taken place at the '56 convention. The president came out [to San Francisco] to make his acceptance address. The president's participation contrasted to Nixon being there even before it started till after adjournment. The president flew out, made his acceptance address, and immediately left before adjournment and went down to play golf in Monterey.

Mrs. Knight and the governor met the president and his wife at the airport [in San Francisco] and rode in with them. Just before they went out, he [Knight] expected to have some word of the vice-presidency from the president in this visit. He did not get it.

They came in from San Francisco airport, went to the president's suite at the St. Francis Hotel. Our headquarters were at the Palace [Sheraton Palace Hotel] and Knight came back to the Palace after his visit with the president. The president talked mainly about personal things, no politics at all, as the governor described it, and about the president's plan to go down to Monterey and play golf.

So at that point--in other words, the day before the nomination for vice-president was to be made--there was an acceptance that the president was going to take Nixon again. Up to that time, we didn't know whether he would or not.

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*Mr. Barrett later remarked, in his editing, that all he could add was that "Governor Knight had considerable communication with Eisenhower's White House chief of staff."

Barrett: But there was a standby. Another governor was prepared to put Knight's name in nomination at the convention if the president had said it was wide open.

Sharp: Who is this governor?

Barrett: Governor [Robert E.] Smylie of Idaho.

Sharp: So Knight was sort of left hanging?

Barrett: Yes.

Sharp: He didn't have a word from Eisenhower saying definitely that Nixon was going to be the vice-president, but President Eisenhower did not tell him that Nixon wasn't going to be the vice-president either.

Barrett: He didn't discuss it. He didn't discuss it till the end. That was on what Knight was going to base his decision. If Knight had the word--in other words, if he had the president to say, "Go for broke," or "I'm all for you," or whatever, he might have gone ahead and run for vice-president.

Knight, as I told you before, could have been the Senatorial nominee in 1950 if he had wanted to be. He told me--he talked both to Barb [Mrs. Douglas Barrett] and me about it--he didn't want to go to Washington.

Sharp: Even as vice-president?

Barrett: Even as vice-president. He really, truly--outside the fact that his position indicated he should, he really, truly had no national ambition that I know of, including to be United States Senator in 1958. We'll get into that later. I understand your format, so I won't get into it now.

It was a matter of being a focal point for stopping Nixon. Two of the Knight delegates--even though they had the unit rule, two of the Knight delegates on the delegation didn't vote for Nixon for vice-president.

Sharp: Who were these delegates?

Barrett: Harry Finks was one and the other was Mary Tibbetts. They absented themselves from their alternates.

Sharp: I think Mr. Finks told me he left the room.

Barrett: Yes. I think if you go back into the files--. He was well known. In fact, his position on the delegation was a point of contention because he was so vigorous, both anti-Nixon and anti-Knowland, but he was a Republican. They objected, and Knight said, "Harry Finks is my delegate, so he's staying on the delegation."

So when the issue was joined and Nixon's nomination came up, Harry left the hall. Because he was well known then--he was accosted by the reporters. They said, "Where are you going?" He said, "I'm going to get a drink." He's not a drinking man--he was talking about getting a drink of water. They said, "Are you going to get back in time for the voting on the vice-president, for the nomination?" "Oh," he said, "I'm very thirsty." And that ended it. He didn't return to the floor until after the nominations had been made.

I didn't attend the convention until after the nominations. When the acceptance speeches were coming up is when I came--and I slept through a part of it because I was tired and it was uninspiring! [laughter]

Sharp: You told me in a phone conversation that before the national convention, you did try to mobilize, or get a feeling for some support, for Goodwin Knight for vice-president. You mentioned a motorcade in Lansing, Michigan.

Barrett: No, I didn't. I didn't.

Sharp: Mr. Finks did?

Barrett: I don't know that it was so much an interest in getting him recognized as a national candidate as it was just getting him recognized nationally. Identifying labor with a Republican. Something in the--I don't know whether you're going to use the word "mystique" of politics--at that level, is that almost unconsciously or instinctively, you keep stepping ahead.

I don't think there was any real conscious effort to develop him, at least as far as those of us in the office knew, as a national candidate. You keep running [laughter] sort of a thing.

Sharp: That's a very interesting phenomenon. I don't think I really understand it.

Barrett: Well, a current illustration. Edmund G. Brown, Sr. celebrated his seventy-fourth birthday this week, saying that he might be a candidate for United States Senator in 1982. Once you get into

Barrett: the--apparently--or, I don't even know if it's once you get into--maybe it's a prerequisite of getting into seeking and attaining major political office--you've got to have the ambition to move forward in politics.

It's one reason I've never run for elective office. I think Vice-President [Walter] Mondale, when he gave up his presidential ambitions last year, announced he was not going to run for president because--one of the reasons he quit because--I think the phrase he used is fairly common in the profession or craft, he wasn't hungry enough. He didn't want to commit himself to do the things that needed to be done.

Look back, even as far back as Abraham Lincoln's run in 1860 for the nomination--not the election--but all the wheeling and dealing and things that were done in his name and by him to get the Republican nomination. You've got to have a crushing drive. You've got to believe that you're the only person available.

Sharp: And Knight didn't believe all those things about himself?

Barrett: Knight was ambitious. He was a good politician. He enjoyed the business of politics. He wasn't all that hung up on his own indispensibility.

For instance, in the 1954 [gubernatorial] campaign, I think I told you about being called in to the office after we knew who our opposition would be. It was Dick [Richard] Graves. During Knight's press conference afterward, somebody asked him about Dick Graves's candidacy and what did he think of it. Knight said, "I never expected to get this job by default." That's one chiche that he manufactured, actually. He said, "The only genuine draft I've ever known in politics"--he said this in private; I don't know if he ever did in public--"was when I sat in front of an open door."

In other words, the bigger the prize, the greater the competition.

Sharp: Mr. Finks told me that he--and he showed me the picture--sponsored a banquet with the top labor leaders from all around the United States held in Chicago.*

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*See the oral history interview conducted with Harry Finks in this same series.

Barrett: Yes, I've seen the picture.

Sharp: And he said that this banquet was held to help give Governor Knight national recognition. It was hard for me to believe that it didn't have a specific point in mind, especially because it was held before the national convention.

Barrett: If it was done for that purpose, it was done in an awfully long shot, because the governor had, in house, no announced intention of actually being candidate for vice-president. Till he died, he had a fixation that Nixon was a bad man, not in the moral sense, but in the political sense, that he was a bad man and that Knight's mission was to oppose him wherever he could and to stop him wherever he could.

Sharp: Not necessarily putting himself--

Barrett: If the only way he could do it was putting himself forward, he would go forward.

Sharp: I see.

Barrett: If negating his own ambitions, he could do it, he would negate his own ambitions. This was one of the guiding stars of his latter-day political activity because he believed he had been betrayed by Nixon and over a very trivial issue, and he didn't give up on it.

Sharp: Were there any groups who saw Governor Knight seriously as the vice-presidential candidate in 1956?

Barrett: I'm sure there were, but I couldn't name them.

Sharp: There were hundreds--I mean literally hundreds of letters in the Goodwin Knight files at Stanford, just from people around California, asking him to run for vice-president so that Mr. Nixon would not be in the White House.

Barrett: That's right.

Sharp: I was fascinated by the sheer volume of those letters and I wondered what sort of impact this might have had on Governor Knight.

The Governor as Realist

Barrett: I always regarded the governor as pretty much of a realist. I think the impact on him would have been "If it can be done, and it can be done by my doing it, I'll do it." I don't think he had a burning ambition to be vice-president of the United States.

I have a tough time being objective about it, in my personality, but, you know, you can always play with if's. If [President] Eisenhower had decided not to go, I do believe that Knight would have made a real college try to secure the California delegation for himself in direct confrontation with the Nixon delegation. In fact, I know he would.

And I think, beyond that, Knight would have done everything he could to pick up what delegates he could outside of California. In other words, I think he would have made an attempt to be more than a favorite son candidate for persident in an open convention.

But I think here again, it's the political instincts coming out. I don't know that Knight really expected that it would come to anything, but he was sort of like a marathon runner--you've got to keep training. You can't let the opportunities pass.

Sharp: That sounds like a really accurate analogy.

The fact that support didn't really come together for Governor Knight for vice-president, was that due more to the fact that he didn't really want to be vice-president, or more the fact that maybe the Nixon forces were too strong, especially in California?

Barrett: The Nixon forces generally were stronger outside of California than they were in, but I think everything hinged on President Eisenhower, as far as Governor Knight was concerned. What he [Eisenhower] wanted or what Governor Knight conceived he [Eisenhower] wanted was the way it was going to go. Knight didn't back off from any support, or lack of it, for the vice-presidency. If the president had said, "I would like to have you my candidate" or "You would be acceptable to me as one of several candidates," I think he [Knight] might have made the try at the convention as it was.

Sharp: How did Mr. Knight talk about the fact that he didn't get the vice-presidential nomination?

Barrett: I don't think it concerned him afterward, after the convention was over.

Sharp: It was business as usual?

Barrett: Business as usual. On to the next one.

Sharp: He certainly had his hands full in Sacramento, anyway.

Barrett: Oh, yes!

Sharp: Did you think he would have made a good vice-president?

Barrett: I think he would have done a good job with whatever he undertook to do.

Sharp: Just because of the kind of personality that he had?

Barrett: That's right.

Sharp: What was his relationship with Mr. Nixon during the convention? Did they speak, or anything?

Barrett: Oh, yes. It was never cordial. Never was after 1954, it was never cordial. I think they're both civilized men. They were both members of the same delegation. Nixon was on the delegation. They shared a table. As I recall it, had the head table where the four sat. Nixon was at one end of the table and Knight was at the other, with Knowland and Kuchel between them.

Sharp: What a quiet table that must have been! [laughter]

Barrett: There was one incident in it, but I'm not going to get it on the tape. Maybe I'll share it with you afterwards.

Sharp: Okay.

Did people make an attempt to not have them together very much, so that there wouldn't be any kind of confrontation between them?

Barrett: I don't think any attempt was necessary.

Sharp: What was the role of William Knowland in all of this at the convention?

Barrett: I hate to try to appraise it. I think he was juggling the two ends. In other words, we were up to that point, fairly cooperative when he was a Senator, as to delegates. In other words, there was a three-way draw plus one on the division of the delegation among the three candidates.

Barrett: If the lot fell to the governor in a specific district where Knowland felt he had a delegate that he wanted to get on from that district, it was negotiable. We wouldn't give up a delegate or an alternate in order to enhance the Knowland position. But if Ed [Edward] Shattuck--I'm just using Ed Shattuck out of the blue because he was a close [William] Knowland associate--if Ed Shattuck Shattuck's district or his position on a delegation happened to have fallen to Knight by lot, Knight would have made a trade with the Senator [Knowland] to get Knowland's friend on board.

I think Knight felt some disappointment, if not resentment, at the fact that the Senator [Knowland] early on aligned his delegates with the Nixon delegates, so that we wound up as a minority third rather than in the upper two.

Sharp: Did Mr. Knowland hope to have any role in getting the vice-presidential nomination?

Barrett: I don't believe so.

Sharp: Either for himself or--

Barrett: No. No, I think he was operating in the role of power broker at the convention. His best shot was obviously at the time Nixon got it in 1952. He [Knowland] aligned with Taft, who was a leading GOP candidate in 1952. Up to this point, up to the point of time in the history we're talking about, there was no real camaraderie between Knowland and Nixon because of the thing that's at least been discussed in history books about Nixon's role on the [Governor Earl] Warren delegation in 1952 and Knowland's loyalty going down the line for Warren. Knowland actually had control of the Warren delegation. He could have delivered it anywhere he wanted. Knowland was chairman of Warren's delegation and his close personal friend.

In 1952, Nixon was not originally included on the Warren delegation to the Republican convention. A place was made on it for him after his own plea to Governor Warren and against some of the best political advice Warren could get, including Knowland. Nixon was thus pledged to the Warren candidacy until released. And the Warren people, including Knowland, felt they had been, to use the popular word, shafted by Nixon in making the deal with Eisenhower and taking the vice-presidential nomination.

So the Knight people in 1956 didn't apprehend anything like the quick action by Senator Knowland to take his delegates and line them up behind Nixon before the president made his wishes known. So there was that problem of getting along.

Sharp: That pretty much finishes the questions on 1956, but I wanted to just get straight for the record what your duties were at the convention. You mentioned that you were a member of the host committee.

Barrett: No, I worked with the host committee. The host committee was a group of citizens organized by [Clem] Whitaker and [Leone] Baxter, who were the professionals who took care of the mechanics. The members of the staff largely stayed out of the politics of the thing and worked more on the host committee thing, like with the plate [points to 1956 commemorative plate] and making accommodations available, not only for delegates, but for the press. The staff stayed out at the--what was the name of that hotel, Barbara [he asked Mrs. Barbara Barrett], the Bayside or the Bayshore? Just sits on top of the hill there.

Barbara Barrett: Bayview?

Barrett: Is that it? It's the one out on the way to San Mateo.

[tape off briefly during telephone call interruption]

Barrett: Just near the Cow Palace. The governor stayed with the delegation down at the [Sheraton] Palace Hotel--that was the delegation headquarters.

Sharp: The last question I had about '56 was to ask you to clarify exactly what your role was at the convention, so that we have it for the record.

Barrett: Mainly scurrying around. I didn't get to the convention itself until the last day. Being on the governor's staff, I was with him at the hotel and doing things that he needed to be done, working with the press and also working with the host committee. We'd get to bed at two o'clock and get up at six, that sort of thing. Just the many little details that keep the machinery running--mainly what the staff did as a whole.

The politics were handled by those more directly involved in the politics.

Sharp: Did Governor Knight talk with you about President Eisenhower's not speaking with him about the vice-presidential nomination at the time?

Barrett: Yes, as soon as he got back.

Sharp: Were you in your room?

Barrett: No. I was at the [Sheraton] Palace Hotel. We were in his suite at the Palace and he came back and talked about it.

Sharp: So you pretty much had his immediate reaction?

Barrett: Right.

Sharp: That he hadn't gotten any word, and that he would just sort of sit and wait for something to happen?

Barrett: There was no politics--he [Knight] was a little astonished that politics was not even discussed from the airport until he said good night to the president. He began to get a little anxious about leaving when he realized nothing was coming down because he had other things to do and he knew the president wanted to retire after his flight--just the four of them [President and Mrs. Eisenhower, and Governor and Mrs. Knight] were visiting in Eisenhower's suite.

Knight described briefly what went on. His response was a little bit surprised that so little mention, if any, was made of the convention business or what was going on. The president was more concerned with personal things, and how he [Knight] was doing, and the golf game.

VI THE "BIG SWITCH" AND GOVERNOR KNIGHT'S CAMPAIGNS FOR RE-ELECTION AND U.S. SENATOR

How the Switch Came About

Sharp: I'd like now to move to the "Big Switch," but start in 1957. I sent you a copy of this letter from Jack Kuhrtz to Mr. Clem Whitaker. It talks about the beginnings of a re-election campaign for Governor Knight, saying very openly that they needed to be quiet about this, and get their organization down. That's dated September 10, 1957.

By April of 1957, there had been some preliminary evidence of problems within the Republican party. Apparently there were phone calls from various Republicans to the governor's office saying that William Knowland was going to give the party trouble. Then by September of '57, there's this kind of letter to Whitaker and Baxter, telling them that re-election campaign plans needed to be started. I wondered if there was any connection.

Barrett: The ball was rolling before September 10, 1957.

Sharp: Yes. Knowland had already decided that he wasn't going to run for re-election--

Barrett: He'd already decided he was going to run for governor, too, whether he'd announced it or not.*

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*William Knowland announced he would not be a candidate for re-election as U.S. Senator on 1 January 1957. Shortly after that, he said he would run for governor of California.

Barrett: In our interviews, we've discussed the Knight position and the Knight people's position relative to the Nixon position. I haven't discussed an active Nixon position. We were aware of the animosity from the Nixon side. They came through, almost from '56--almost from '54--but certainly from '56. There was a conscious effort on the part of the strongest Nixon people to dump Knight as governor.

We knew that they had approached very nearly every possible Republican to compete with him in the primary. We knew there was only one they were apt to get that could give us difficulty, and that was Senator Knowland. But they approached Controller [Robert] Kirkwood. They approached Lieutenant Governor [Harold "Butch"] Powers and others.

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Barrett: I don't think they [Nixon people] could have gotten [Lieutenant] Governor Powers, in any case, but my point is that they were looking for a candidate, and we knew, on the basis of private conversation, that the Senator's wife [Mrs. William Knowland] was not about to go back to Washington if he ran for re-election. She was tired of it and she said so in private conversation.

As late as the latter part of the summer of '57, some of the people that are described as having been talking to the governor [Governor Knight] and Senator Knowland told the governor that if he would get off the right-to-work issue--and this came down through the California Federation of Labor convention address*--if he [Knight] wouldn't go into that and just backpedal from his stand against right-to-work, that they would undertake to talk to Bill Knowland about not running for governor.

I was in his [Knight's] office on a private telephone call, so I can't tell you who he was talking to, but they were pretty plain about it, and he said, "I can't do that. Even if I wanted to, I couldn't do it, but I don't want to. The Republican nomination is no good to me if it's going to cost me the election."

So in summer of '57, he [Knight] was reading the right-to-work issue from the other side of the Knowland stand and he saw it as a no-win situation for the Republican party and for himself,

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*Mr. Barrett remarked later that Governor Knight traditionally was invited to address the federation's regular convention in August.

Barrett: particularly. He made his stand on right-to-work in '54, on his own inclination, not on any questions that labor put to him--it wasn't a major issue then.

Sharp: So you're actually telling me the "Big Switch" just didn't happen, that it developed over about a year and a half's worth of haggling and questioning about the right-to-work issue, and Knight's beginning to lose support from certain wings or elements of the Republican party.

Barrett: That's right.

Sharp: In California.

Barrett: That's right. In fact, the so-called switch didn't come until after there'd actually been a testing of the governor on the question of whether he'd remain in the Republican party. There was very serious consideration offered him to register as a Democrat and seek the Democratic nomination.

Sharp: For governor?

Barrett: For governor. And compete with Knowland in the general [election].

Sharp: I knew that there was some talk about his running as a Democrat, but I thought that was just for United States Senator.

Barrett: No. Once the switch was made, Knight was resigned to the fact that he was not going to be elected to anything.

Sharp: We'll get to that.

When Knowland decided to run for governor, then, in '57, what was the effect of this action on the governor's office?

Barrett: We weren't surprised by his public announcement. The office staff was pretty universal--of course, we were universally in support of the governor. He was the kind of a man that his staff supported.

[interruption: earth tremor]

Barbara Barrett: What in the world!?

Barrett: I don't know.

Sharp: I think it was an earthquake.

Barbara Barrett: I think it was, too.

Sharp: I don't like those. [laughter]

Barbara Barrett: It scared me.

Barrett: At any rate--where were we?

Sharp: Talking about the effect of Knowland's decision to run for governor on the governor's office staff.

Barrett: We discussed for some time, up until what was described in one article here as the "governor's flu attack which took him to Arizona." We worked on all the alternatives, in other words, facing it out and going a head on head in the primary, or the governor just not being a candidate for re-election.

I don't think there was any real enthusiasm, at least, or support for the governor's ultimate decision to run for United States Senator.

Sharp: Was there a general feeling that he should have stayed in the race for governor?

Barrett: We were all realists and he was the realist of all of us. If he could not get the Republican nomination, in his own judgment, there was no sense in his staying in the race. Now, if he had decided to do it, all of us would have stayed with him and gone with him. There would have been no defection.

But just prior to his trip to Arizona, [Richard] McKinney and myself and two or three other members of the staff met over at the [Governor's] Mansion late into the evening.* I would say that the consensus there--and, of course, I would say the consensus because it reflected my own feeling--that Knight didn't feel that he could make it--didn't want to run. It was during his last year in office: let somebody else fight about it.

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*Richard McKinney was Governor Knight's travel secretary for part of his administration.

Barrett: The next governors' conference was going to be in Hawaii. Go to Hawaii and enjoy yourself, don't break your heart: this was the general consensus.

The problem was that Whitaker and Baxter had said, "Wherever you go, we'll go with you, but we can't get any money. There's no money left in the pot. We can't get any money."*

The governor used the statement then. He said, "If the primary was a month from now, we might make it. But people are going to get tired of the story before the primary. It'll work its way back to the classified ads and the obits [obituaries], and people'll turn to the funny papers and Christmas shopping, and that'll be it. We have no money to keep going. It's a real tough situation." He was very distressed by it.

Dick McKinney went away from the Mansion meeting. Dick couldn't sleep that night at all. He was just that upset about it and about the whole prospect, because we had a close personal affection for the governor.

Sharp: And you saw this more as a personal loss for the governor than anything else.

Barrett: If you're in a statewide campaign and have no funds and the other side seems to be taking the first prize, yes.

Sharp: What was the effect of his decision not to run for re-election on the governor himself?

Barrett: [pauses] I think he was let down. The final decision was made away from Sacramento and away from the staff. By the time we saw him again, the thing was settled and there was no more real discussion.

Sharp: This was after the trip to Arizona?

Barrett: Yes. The trip to Arizona was made before the decision was made. Actually, there was only one former member of the staff who was in touch with him.

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*Clem Whitaker and Leone Baxter were in charge of the public relations area of Goodwin Knight's re-election campaign in 1957.

Sharp: Was this Newt [Newton] Stearns?

Barrett: This was Newt Stearns. None of the rest of us was directly in communication with him [Knight] until he went to Washington, [D.C.] and made his announcement there.

Sharp: Why was Newt Stearns involved in the trip to Arizona?

Barrett: Because he had a dual role. Newt Stearns would take a leave of absence during campaigns from the staff and go to work for Whitaker and Baxter. Well before the administration closed shop, Newt Stearns resigned from the staff and went onto the Whitaker and Baxter staff. He was working for them when he died. It was a Whitaker and Baxter operation that took the governor to Arizona. It was off season.

Sharp: You mean it was Whitaker and Baxter's idea that he go to Arizona?

Barrett: I don't know whose idea it was. I know they went with him.

Sharp: Whitaker and Baxter went with him?

Barrett: Yes. They made the arrangements to go with him. They made the arrangements for the hotel.

Sharp: Did they help him decide not to run for re-election?

Barrett: It would have to be a guess on my part, but I would say they were among the last to talk to him before he made the decision.

Sharp: They were probably pretty realistic about his chances because they were so aware of the funds problem. It was their job to deal with that.

Barrett: Well, there's that and they were basically a public relations firm, rather than [being] closely latched to the governor. They were professionals, and they were looking down the road, I think, to their own future. They were and are, basically, a conservative public relations firm, so they would be dealing with the winner of the Republican primary, particularly if he was elected in future time.

As much as being Knight supporters, they were a conduit from both ends.

Sharp: They were close personal friends of the Knights, too.

Barrett: Well, if they say so. Yes, socially they were together. The governor, on the other hand, during the events subsequent to October '57, became less and less close to them in a political sense.

Sharp: What was the main reason, then, that he decided not to run for re-election, do you think?

Barrett: Because he didn't believe he could be re-elected under the circumstances.

Sharp: Because of the strength of the Knowland forces?

Barrett: Within the Republican primary. He decided not to run as a Democrat because it just went against his grain, for one thing. He was Progressive Republican, but he was a Republican, and the second thing was that there were many legislators who had supported him that he would have had to leave high and dry. And he wasn't going to do that. So those are the two considerations that kept him out of that.

But the decision not to seek the Republican nomination for re-election was based on his conviction, and his conviction was based on political advice he got, whether we liked it or not, that Knowland had most of the Republican power on his side and a lot of the industrial power on the right-to-work issue, although a lot of big employers on the right-to-work issue came out against it when the issue was finally joined.

Knowland was reading public opinion polls, which that far in advance of an election is sometimes rather dangerous. You've got to use instincts which you have.

Sharp: What was the role of the L.A. Times and their financing of William Knowland?

Barrett: Those are two separate questions, really.

I do know that the Knights were socially close to the Chandlers, particularly during that summer [1957]. A lot of the governor's efforts were bent on pointing out to them the dangers to the Republican party in espousing a Knowland candidacy on the right-to-work issue.

I think in our previous interview we discussed the axis of the [Oakland] Tribune, the [San Francisco] Chronicle, and the [Los Angeles] Times. The Tribune obviously was on the other side and

Barrett: the Times finally was ending up over there. All this had a good deal of influence on the governor's thinking about his chances, because he'd come up in this tradition of California politics of the political power of the three family newspapers (Knowland, Chandler, and DeYoung) in the GOP.

As I say, he was an ambitious man, he was a happy man, but he also had in back of his head the realism of the situation. He never took himself as the indispensable man--"they can't make it without me"--you know.

The Campaign for U.S. Senator

Sharp: Did you participate in his campaign for U.S. Senator?

Barrett: Only to the degree that I stayed with him in the staff. That was one of the two or three times that I offered to quit the staff because I had some disagreement with the way the campaign was being handled, and Whitaker and Baxter for a while were communicating with the staff through me.

I told Knight, "We're coming to the end of it here. You're entitled to as much tranquility as you can have. I'll quit and go back to the mountains if you'd be more comfortable with that."

He turned me down on it. My participation in the campaign for United States Senator was, as I say, sort of a person the campaign people called in the [governor's] office when they wanted something from the [governor's] office. Congressman [Clair] Engle, who was his opponent, I know, was in the office a couple of times to see the governor on other business. It was not a bitter campaign at all.

Having come from that district where Senator Engle was representative, I knew him, so we exchanged pleasantries on that level.

Sharp: How did Knight develop his ideas to run on for U.S. Senator?

Barrett: That's an interesting question that I never considered before. As I indicated before, I don't really think that he believed he was going to be elected United States Senator. He certainly didn't lock his candidacy for United States Senator to that of Bill Knowland.

Barrett: I was present at the CNPA, California Newspaper Publishers Association, in southern California during that period and, of course, the Knowland family was active in that organization when Governor Knight voluntarily posed for a picture with Attorney General [Edmund G., Sr.] Brown, who was the Democrat nominee for governor.

I think it was at one time several years after the administration was over, my wife and children and I were down in Los Angeles visiting with the Knights. Knight's own remark at that time, and it may have been a degree of rationalization, was that one of his principal motivations for not doing what I suggested, and that was to just take it easy for the last year and be governor and enjoy it--he wanted to make a demonstration that in the general election, he would pull more votes than Knowland, which he did by about 750,000 votes, I think. That was his appraisal, and I never went out and checked it on the computer.

I think one of his strategies in the campaign was that he didn't back down from his position on right-to-work, for instance, which was the core [of Knowland's campaign], outside of Knowland's own desire to return to California and use the governorship of California as a power base. Philosophically, the difference over right-to-work was the difference in the campaign, or the difference between Knowland and Knight. There's really no reconciling the two positions in the ticket. So the ticket, at least at that level, was separate. I don't even recall--I think Lieutenant Governor Powers was a candidate for re-election.* I don't think he appeared on many platforms of Knowland, if any.

Sharp: No, I don't think so.

Do you know the name Leo Preisker?

Barrett: I know it only to the extent that I am almost inclined to correct you, but it's been so many years--it's Prisker, I think.

Sharp: He sent Governor Knight a letter to get up what he called a portfolio of non-controversial national issues to run on because George Christopher, who was also running for U.S. Senator at the time, had sort of absorbed William Knowland's program to run on as U.S. Senator.

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*Lieutenant Governor Harold "Butch" Powers was defeated for re-election in 1958.

Sharp: Because people have said that the U.S. Senator race, at least for Knight, was very casually run and that Knight really didn't think that he was going to win it, I just wondered if he went through the motions of sitting down and writing plans or programs that he would implement if he became U.S. Senator.

Barrett: That's my recollection. I think the impression that Knight did not expect to win--he certainly was not enthusiastic about being a United States Senator. I said he could have been United States Senator eight years earlier without too much trouble.

Sharp: Why didn't he just not run at all, then?

Barrett: Yes, that's a good question, as my wife said. My wife is a good supporter. She held to my position that his best spot, if he wasn't going to run, was to not run for anything. As I say, Governor Knight, Mrs. Knight, Mrs. Barrett, and I were discussing this around the pool some time later. In fact the children were far enough along. It was about the last time the Barrett family went on a vacation, all six of us. That's the time Knight said that his main reason for running was to demonstrate he would have been a better candidate for the Republican party to win in 1958 than Bill Knowland was.

The switch was not so much voluntary as forced on Knight--"your choice is to quit or run for Senator. You'll never make it as governor."

Sharp: You're drawing a portrait for me of somebody who found himself in maybe a typical political position. He found himself in the position of perhaps running for vice-president and he really didn't want to be vice-president. Now he's found himself in a position of running for U.S. Senator when he really didn't want to be a U.S. Senator, only so that somebody else--

Barrett: I'd say that if he had been elected United States Senator, which all the polls showed, and his own political instincts indicated he probably wouldn't be elected, he would have given good service. He would have done well, but he wouldn't have been much different in that position than he was as governor.

In other words, his political philosophies were such that he had broad general principles that he implemented on the basis of the give and take of day-to-day work.

Of course, for him to take a bland--what was the phrase he used--"non-controversial series of positions," I don't think that would be too characteristic. He wasn't the kind of person that went toward non-controversy.

Sharp: Perhaps once you've stated your position on right-to-work, it's hard to be non-controversial about anything. Where do you go after you've done that?

Barrett: On the water question, on the organization of the State Athletic Commission, on the reorganization of liquor control, on his state budget, the whole thing. He wasn't a man of indefiniteness. He was a man who'd been accustomed to be a judge, at least in the court of first jurisdiction, and making decisions.

He was a decision maker; he was a pretty fair administrator because he delegated a lot and still kept his hand on the people he delegated it to.

Sharp: Did he talk about the "Big Switch" later on in his life?

Barrett: The conversation that we had about being able to outpoll Knowland--but outside of that, no.

Sharp: He didn't bring it up at every meeting.

Barrett: Oh, no, no, no, no. I think, at least in his own mind, he accomplished what he had to accomplish, or did what he had to do. I think characteristic of him--I described our birthday parties for him.*

At one of these he told me, "I've only made one decision in my life that I've regretted." That was his decision to go to Ohio and campaign for the [Thomas] Dewey-[Earl] Warren ticket when his first wife died in Los Angeles. He said, "That doesn't mean that I haven't made some bad decisions. But the only thing you can do then is go on and take a different course from that point."

In other words, what he was saying to me is "I don't look back." He did tend to physically feel a tremendous emotional stress such as the pressures that were on him to--on what you refer to as the "Big Switch." I suppose it was from the standpoint of the outside observer. The "Big Switch" was actually, from my standpoint, a surrender to an inevitable conclusion.

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*See pp. 38-39.

Barrett: But no, he didn't dwell on it. We talked of other things. I don't know whether Barbara [Mrs. Barrett] told you about her first meeting with him [Governor Knight], at least, when he came to our house in Truckee.

Sharp: No.

Barrett: So he had an interest in our family. Mrs. Knight, at that trip that I was talking about, got me into swimming trunks for the first time in our married life--and we'd been married how long when we made that trip to Arizona?

Barbara Barrett: About nineteen years.

Barrett: The oldest girl was about ready to go out of high school. It's the first time my wife had ever seen me in swimming trunks! Because Mrs. Knight taught me you just don't tell Mrs. Knight no.

Sharp: I know.

Barrett: She's a gently persuasive woman. It's hard to disappoint her.

We were around the pool. We were talking about the kids' progress, about his family, about the future. He had a great mind for the stock market. He never gave up trying to explain it to me, and never was successful in getting me to understand it. My wife has some stock [laughter]; I don't.

Politics was not the beginning and end of our association; we didn't dwell on it.

Sharp: Did you get to see him then periodically, after he left office--

Barrett: Yes.

Sharp: --and you went your own way?

Barrett: Sure.

VII A FRIEND'S OBSERVATIONS ON GOODWIN KNIGHT'S POST-GOVERNOR PERIOD, 1959-1970

Sharp: How did he spend that period from '58 until 1970?

Barrett: In business pursuits. He was chairman of the board of the Imperial Bank in Los Angeles. I think he went every day to the office in the afternoon.

When we were down there, it was in July. He would get up in the morning, spend a couple of hours talking with his broker, and this was almost a daily routine, about the buying and selling of his stock. He sold all his stock and gave up all his outside holdings when he became governor, but he immediately went back into the market [afterwards]. He was very good at it. He told me at least that he made money in 1929, which not many people did. I have no reason to disbelieve him since he had a pretty good degree of prosperity.

He came downstairs in his swimming trunks. When we came upon him on that visit, he was out stomping bugs around his pool [laughter] and cleaning out his pool. He'd spend time visiting with us and the children and then get in his car and go to the bank. I went with him to the bank one day. That was the longest period of time we visited with them. But we had other occasions we'd go down.

I wasn't able because of my employment at the time to attend his funeral, but my second daughter, Sheila, lived in Santa Monica at that time and attended on behalf of the family. He saw her before she started school. He knew her from the time before she started school, and by then she was a parent herself.

He walked up to our house in Truckee. I helped arrange a tour of the mountain counties when he was lieutenant governor for him. So he came to our place and stopped at the bottom

Barrett: of the steps--there was a series of steps going up. He looked up and the children were all lined up at the window. He said, "Oh, you've got visitors." I looked at him and said, "No, they all belong here!"

He came in and we were going out to Donner Lake for the meeting and Barbara was coming with us. He spent the afternoon--he and Bob [Robert] Alderman and Charlie Worrell. Before he left, he gave my oldest daughter a quarter to help the baby-sitter with the younger children.

I sat up front with the driver and Barbara sat in the back with him. They chatted about other things. He was quite a relaxed person when he was out of the limelight.

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Sharp: That finishes the questions that I have on the "Big Switch" and the period after 1958 except for one comment that you made, that he spent the last years of his life doing anti-Nixon activities in California. I wondered quite what you meant by that.

Barrett: I wouldn't say that he devoted a lot of time to it. He did devote a lot of discussion to it. One area was the Nixon candidacy for governor.

Sharp: This is 1962?

Barrett: Yes.

Sharp: Knight briefly ran, of course.

Barrett: There's a little background to that. He was approached to run before Nixon really announced. He was approached to run and what Knight said to me at the time was, "What do I need with it? Why do I need that aggravation?" The phrase was "I've already had my picture painted." (Every governor has his picture painted and it's hung in the corridor.) He said, "I don't need it." As a matter of fact, he had two pictures painted. The first one, the artist painted him in a brown suit, which he rejected because he had never worn a brown suit in his adult life. He went to blues and grays. So he had another one done.

Then when Nixon flat-footed came out and said, "I'm going to run for governor," then Knight said, "I will be a candidate for governor." The only thing that broke that candidacy up was he came down with hepatitis. They had to let the help go at the house because of the infectious nature of it. That's when Virginia [Mrs. Knight] really showed up because she took care of that man night and day, tirelessly.

Barrett: That knocked him out of that box. But he would have stayed in that campaign to try to break up Nixon becoming governor of California.

Sharp: Do you think he would have won if he'd stayed in?

Barrett: I don't know, I don't. Probably not, for the same reasons that he would have probably lost to Knowland. Nixon had not only the California Republican power going for him, he had national Republican power. I do know that Nixon personally asked Knight to not run and suggested an alternative for him.

Sharp: What was the alternative?

Barrett: Well, if Paul Mason can't tell you, I won't.* But Knight refused it. When it came out in the press, and you can probably check it back if you want to, Nixon denied that the call had been made.

Sharp: Howard Edgerton, who was involved in that exchange, from our record--

Barrett: He may have been involved in the exchange, but the call was made by the candidate to the potential candidate. Nixon talked to Knight and Knight said no. There was only one witness to the conversation.

Sharp: That was Mrs. Knight?

Barrett: No, it wasn't. It was Mr. Mason.

Sharp: Oh, I see.

Barrett: That's the reason I'm not going into the details of it, if Mason didn't.

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*Paul Mason was Governor Knight's legislative secretary. See Mr. Mason's oral history interview, "Covering the Legislature for Governor Goodwin J. Knight," in this volume.

Sharp: I did find the article in the newspaper that referred to the suggestion and as I understand it, the suggestion is that he perhaps could have a position on the California Supreme Court or some other state office.*

Barrett: Knight, I don't think would have been interested in being a supreme court justice since if he'd wanted to be a judge, he had it made before he ever went into partisan politics.

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*See San Francisco Chronicle, October 5, 1961, for Governor Knight's telling about a phone conversation with Howard Edgerton in which Mr. Edgerton said Mr. Nixon was offering Knight "any job in state government, even chief justice of the California Supreme Court" if he would not run for governor in 1962.

VIII YEARS ON THE YOUTH AUTHORITY, 1958-1965

First Remarks

Sharp: The last set of questions that I have is on your years on the Youth Authority. I don't know if you want to take a break for a few minutes and then we can talk?

Barrett: No, I don't care. That's up to you.

Sharp: Okay. I'll keep going on.

Besides Heman Stark on the Youth Authority with you, were O.H. Close, Ben B. Stein, Evelyn Schilling, and Ralph B. Wright.

Barrett: Yes, that's the first bunch. There were changes as I stayed on.

Sharp: But this was the initial group?

Barrett: Right. That's who I went in with. When I went on the board, that was the board.

Sharp: What all led up to your being appointed to the Youth Authority in 1958?

Barrett: I guess my service in the governor's office. The fact that the governor offered it to me. I was asked if there was anything that I would be interested in having beyond the close of the administration. Being the one who was supervising the record keeping, the only one I had any interest in at all was the Youth Authority.

Sharp: I wondered what sort of contact you had with the Youth Authority before that--

Barrett: I had served from the time I was young with youth groups, and by the time I was twenty-two, twenty-three years old, I was on the county probation committee where I lived. I'd always taken an active interest in the field. I had the intimate contact within the administration with the department and its functions. That's my background on the appointment: my interest in it and the governor's willingness to appoint.

Sharp: The Youth Authority was established in 1942 under Governor Earl Warren. Karl Holton was the head of it at that time and Heman Stark was under him and became head of it later.*

Barrett: Back down a little bit. The first director, technically, was O.H. Close.

Sharp: Oh, I see.

Barrett: Karl Holton became director when it became a full-time position. O.H. Close was the superintendent of Preston School at the time and was appointed to the board.** He remained as a board member, but when the department actually got underway and rolling, Holton was the director.

Sharp: Apparently Holton focused on what he called delinquency prevention. Both he and Mr. Stark saw delinquency prevention as a problem of community organization.

Barrett: Stark and Holton were close because they were both in the Los Angeles probation department. Holton, when it became necessary to devote full time to being chairman of the board and the director of the Youth Authority, and those positions went hand in glove legally, as the law developed and the department developed--Holton stepped down because he didn't want to give up his position in Los Angeles County. Heman Stark became director when Holton became head of the Los Angeles County Probation Department.

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*See oral history interviews with Karl Holton and Heman Stark in Earl Warren and the Youth Authority, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1972.

**Preston School is a boys' "correctional" institution near Ione in Amador County, California.

Sharp: But Mr. Stark said that the majority of the attention of the Youth Authority then was really more concerned with the construction of buildings and the parole force and other day-to-day problems like that. I wondered what you thought now that you look back.

Barrett: Oh, you're talking about the Department of the Youth Authority.

Sharp: Yes.

Barrett: See, the board had nothing to do with the administration of the department. That was Stark's role as director. As chairman of the board, we were concerned with policy and with cases, with programing and with case hearings. That was our function.

Sharp: You didn't decide what buildings were going up where and if the forestry camp needed more buildings, or anything like that.

Barrett: No. That was an administrative thing and Stark was very clear that he was the chief administrator. He did come to the board and discuss these things, but the decisions were his and the physical programs were his responsibility.

Sharp: So the major portion of your time on the board had to do with the caseload.

Barrett: Caseload and programs.

The Community Treatment Program

Sharp: What kinds of programs?

Barrett: Well, for instance, the community treatment program for one. Mrs. Thomas--Evelyn Schilling--was the one on the board that I think brought it up. [Heman] Stark espoused it. I seconded the motion and then I was the board member, being resident in Sacramento, because the geographical area for the program was staked out in that area.* I had most to do with the selection

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*Mr. Barrett later added that Sacramento, Yolo, and San Joaquin Counties made up the project area geographically.

Barrett: of cases that went into that program. It was a pilot research project to see if some program could be developed where we could avoid institutionalization in the first instance.

Sharp: And have the youth remain in his own community?

Barrett: In the community with more enriched coverage. In other words, once the program was set in motion, there was an experimental caseload and a controlled caseload. You understand research. We tried to maintain its scientific integrity to the highest degree we could, dealing with human subjects. And we did pretty well. We came up with what I thought was some pretty good material on it.

The legislative politics of it made it kind of difficult--or the state fiscal policy problems did. On this one, and I don't want to spend too much time on one program, but we would have much smaller caseloads, and specialists rather than generalists as parole agents. We brought in, for instance, a man from southern California into the Sacramento parole area because he was particularly adept at finding employment.

Another person was particularly adept at [finding] foster homes. The educational program so often--at least at that time, and I suppose it's no better now--used the easiest way to deal with a misbehaving young person in schools. This was to suspend them from school, which, you know, is probably what they are looking for.

The community treatment project set up a school away from school. If you were kicked out of school and you were in that experimental caseload, you didn't go out on the street [gestures with pointing finger]. You went to this study hall where you had parole agents and a couple of teachers, even, to supervise them during that period.

The parole agents were so intensely involved with their cases that I recall one, I think it was Keith Vermillion, was telling me, he was walking around the neighborhood after hours and went into this pool hall and saw his parolee looking up from a pool cue, and the kid just threw up his hands.

There were young people who actually would have rather gone to an institution than into this caseload because the supervision was that intense.

Barrett: The community treatment program has come down in a modified form in the state subsidy to local probation programs if they find alternatives to state commitment. The problem we had with the state was trying to convince the Department of Finance that this was a substitute for institution and not an enriched parole program. If a ward of the Youth Authority was to be referred to parole directly from the clinic, they were considered to be outside the selection process, even.

There was an evaluator of the program plus the usual people (board members, counselors, clerk, and therapists) in the board room. The ward would come in, and the interview process began. This all took place at the Northern Reception Center and Clinic, and covered Yolo, Sacramento, and San Joaquin Counties. The ward would then be excused, and the decision would be arrived at as to what the disposition of the case would be. Then we were told that this case is a control or an experimental. We had no prior knowledge of where the case would fall.

If we decided this was an immediate, or a ninety-day parole, this was outside the whole experiment. So then the person who was the evaluator of the project said, "Well, that's a control case," or "That's an experimental case" and would make the decision as to whether that ward went to an institution or went to this enriched parole program. And that went on for three or four years.

Sharp: Was there more money in the state legislature for this kind of project or more money for institutionalizing the youth?

Barrett: I think there was more available for the more traditional programs.

Sharp: Why?

Barrett: Because this program was new. It was a new concept.

Sharp: Was there fear that these kids would just cause more problems like they had before they were even brought into the Youth Authority?

Barrett: There was in the law then, and I suppose it's still there, the option on the Youth Authority to refuse a case if they didn't think they could treat the case. But there was a policy during Heman Stark's administration and in Karl Holton's administration--which may still prevail, depending on the bed load in the institutions--to take every case that was legally committed.

Barrett: Some communities tended to send all juvenile detention cases to the state rather than place them in local programs. This gives a very uneven input from many places and heavy commitments for what we might consider minor things.

Logrolling and the Placement of Centers

Sharp: I wanted to ask you about that.

Before we get to that, I wanted to talk to you about one comment that was made in an interview with our office several years ago about the problem of logrolling within the state legislature. There was some effort on the part of state legislators to get these kinds of institutions within their own counties. Did you have dealings with this problem?

Barrett: With Heman [Stark], the administrative head, I didn't deal with the legislature, except on a very informal basis, and that was on the basis of personal friendships and contacts. I would tend to think that this was a self-fulfilling statement, or self-fulfilling prophecy, or whatever you want to call it, on Stark's part, because I have not detected a stampede in any community to have an institution located near it. That's one of the problems in locating institutions.

Sharp: Because the community expects that only problems will arise?

Barrett: That the problems will be greater than the employment. Now, you can locate an institution in Amador County, for instance, because they've had the Preston School of Industry there for years--for generations--and we had one other institution in that county--that's Pine Grove, was it?

Sharp: Yes.

Barrett: Pine Grove, Pine Ridge, I can never remember; not at this point. Pine Grove we could work, and we could work the Fricot Ranch in Calaveras County from there too, within a week. But the problem of locating a prison or a juvenile detention facility, whatever you want to call it, whatever current name you want to give to it--or a state hospital--putting it into a new location is a difficult community relations problem.

Barrett: The only place that I know the legislature went pretty strongly to locate an institution was an adult institution, Susanville. The community felt the need for an infusion of new money into the community. As a matter of fact, the Knight administration turned it down. The Brown administration--[Edmund G.] Brown, Sr. administration--accepted it as a camp center.

The department was not in favor of it [the institution at Susanville], the Department of Corrections, because of its remoteness. Because of the professional qualifications and qualities of the people who work for the inmates, particularly in the face-to-face contact, these people want to be close to educational facilities, to certain cultural situations that aren't immediately available in Susanville or a place like Susanville. So there was resistance to the location of it there, outside of the community.

For years, there's been effort to break down San Quentin [prison] and divide its population up. It's very difficult to find a place to put the smaller alternate prisons because the communities say, "Sure, we want more prisons to hold more of the bad guys, but we don't want them next door." [laughter]

Dealing With Criticism of Procedures for Youthful Offenders

Sharp: I sent you some copies of criticisms of the law enforcement procedures for youthful offenders during the late fifties and early 1960s period.

Barrett: I was aware of the criticisms.

Sharp: Some of these criticisms were that there was too much variation in the treatment of juvenile offenders from community to community.

Barrett: That's right.

Sharp: There was excessive use of detention.

Barrett: Yes.

Sharp: There was not enough emphasis on rehabilitation and more emphasis on punitive action instead; juveniles were declared wards of the state on too minor grounds, et cetera.

Sharp: Was the program you mentioned to me a few minutes ago, the community treatment project--was that developed in response to some of these criticisms or independent of them?

Barrett: No. I would say it was probably a response to the same drummer as the critics were listening to. Some of us who were in the Youth Authority, particularly on the Youth Authority board, responded to these criticisms by support of the--Juvenile Justice Act sticks in my head, but I'm not sure. This at least attacked the problem of prolonged detention.

In spite of all the affirmative support that we had for the act, it got through largely because of one of its opponents, who was a superior court judge. Of course, all juvenile court judges were superior court judges. He defended the lengthy detention.

Sharp: On what grounds?

Barrett: On the ground that it made them [youthful offenders] more amenable.

Sharp: To what?

Barrett: To handling in the court. Ninety-five percent of them [youthful offenders] were found committable on this basis. You can hold a kid in the juvenile tank for ninety days; he'll tell you whatever you want to hear. That's what I got out of it because I wasn't on the same side of the fence as the judge.

Sharp: Did that frighten you, that a judge would have that feeling about a youth?

Barrett: Yes. Whether he had feeling or not, yes, it disturbed me. But what disturbed me more than whether any judge used it or not was the power to hold anybody. I'll be quite blunt. I believe in civil liberties and I was disturbed during a good deal of my service on the Youth Authority, and several of us were, by the negation of basic civil rights in the name of "we're doing it for your own good" sort of thing, what you euphemistically refer to as "protection" of the juveniles.

They had a commitment offense for what they called it at the time--"being in danger of leading a lewd and lascivious life." Of course, a lot of them who came to us as first offenders had been to bat in juvenile court many, many times. Our jurisdiction extended from age nine to, in some cases, twenty-five.

Thoughts About the Facilities, the Offenders, and Recidivism

Sharp: Did you ever visit any of the facilities, like the Youth Training School or the forestry camps?

Barrett: All of them.

Sharp: That was part of your job, to go around--

Barrett: We held our hearings there.

Sharp: What did you think of these places?

Barrett: The Youth Training School--that's the one in Ontario--

Sharp: It opened in '59.

Barrett: Yes, that opened while I was still on the board.

As to the concept of the Trade Advisory Council, the training they got there--and I was in on the selection process for the first group of young men who went to the Youth Training School. I was for the school because of the concepts that were built into it. Now, whether they realized the concepts as they went down the years, I don't know, because I wasn't on that board much longer.

Sharp: Could you clarify what the Trade Advisory Council was and what its basic concepts were?

Barrett: A TAC is a committee from the community, made up of trade union members and employers, to advise the institution staff on training programs for trade entry and employment. The basic concept was to take bright, amenable young men and develop their education and trade training aptitudes for employment out of the institution.

Heman Stark, who had started this institution, had the dual role as member of the board as its chairman and as director of the department. Stark's administrative staff asked us to be highly selective in sending the first cases to Youth Training School so that they wouldn't have any need for a solitary confinement unit, that we wouldn't have high escape risks, because they frankly didn't want to deal with the discipline problems as much as they wanted to take trainable young men and try to turn them around. So they used training schools specifically.

Barrett: The forestry camps had the highest rate of success. I think this is partially endemic to the forestry camp program itself and it was, to a lesser degree, in the selection process of the young men that went there.

Sharp: What did they use to do in forestry camps?

Barrett: They worked.

Sharp: So they were used as forest fire fighters?

Barrett: Not only forest fire fighters but in cleaning up fire trails, working around public camp areas. I had tremendous respect for the young men who went out and fought the fire lines. Of course, the Department of Corrections--for the adults--has a similar program. Youth Authority wards went out and they held their own on the fire line.

Now, what was it, seventeen or eighteen, you couldn't send anybody younger than that to the forestry camps, so they were the young adults, the so-called youthful offenders.

But in addition to that, there was a regular regime. Everybody at camp had a job. There was little or no idleness there. Camp maintenance, sign painting, and so on.

Barbara Barrett: Helping to find lost campers and that sort of thing.

Barrett: Oh yes, search parties. That's right.

See, we're getting into a whole big broad area now and I'm not going to go all that far into it. But my concept is that many of these youthful offenders, in fact a good many offenders, really don't want to be offenders. There's a large group of people that don't know how to work. It's not a case that they're not a printer, or they're not an airplane mechanic, or something. They just don't know how to get up at eight o'clock in the morning and be on the job and stay on the job until the noon whistle and go back at a quarter to one and work till five with the customary breaks. They sort of drift.

The camps were geared to regularity of work. The incidents that required disciplinary action at camp had very little to do with basic delinquency. They had more to do with some racial problems and things like that.

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Barrett: The Youth Training School was geared to teaching specific trades.

Sharp: Like what?

Barrett: Right offhand, I can't recall.

Sharp: Mechanical skills?

Barrett: Mechanical [skills], and carpentry, and that sort of thing. There was a range of skills from culinary to plumbing.

Sharp: And it was for men?

Barrett: For young men, the youthful offenders. You could be sent to the Youth Authority either from an adult court or a juvenile court. The group we're talking about now is the group who were over eighteen. They were never sent for a term of years; they were sent to a birth date, either twenty-one, twenty-three, or twenty-five, depending on whether they were juvenile court, misdemeanants or felons.

It was this older group of young men who showed an aptitude for training. The air frame and air engine course is the one that sticks in my mind most vividly. It was not YTS [Youth Training School]. It was probably in the toughest institution that the Youth Authority dealt with--that was Dueul Vocational Institution at Tracy, DVI, which is a Department of Corrections institution. But there was a mix there.

Now, they had two programs at DVI in air engines and air frame which were training these young men in the aeronautics industry. You had to be there at least thirteen to eighteen months to get your certificate of completion. Thewe young men were generally--say, 95 percent placed on jobs. The aim of YTS was similar. YTS and DVI had Trade Advisory Councils in various trades, even in the culinary trades, where the guys worked in the kitchen and served on the serving line.

The TAC's had employers and trade unionists who advised the school on what kind of training would best set these guys up. So whether they were working or in classrooms, or wherever they were, they were aimed at a trade training program. That was the concept of YTS.

Sharp: To change the focus just a little bit, you were also on the governor's advisory committee on children and youth for 1959-1960?

Barrett: No. I was on the Board of Corrections, but that was by virtue of my membership on the CYA Board. The advisory committee, paradoxically, I have been on because it's a citizens' group and they asked my present employer. As a matter of fact, the California Labor Federation has pretty consistently had some members on this. It's a broad-based group from all over the state.

Sharp: Is the purpose of this committee a job-seeking effort for youthful offenders or--?

Barrett: It's advisory to the department and to the state administration in any area that we can help.

Sharp: I have a couple of concluding questions, then. Have you concluded anything about the values that Californians have shown in handling their youthful offenders?

Barrett: You might say Prop 13's been kind of a watershed as far as my mind is concerned, because of the fiscal constraints it places on innovative programs. But up to that point, I think there's been a great deal of at least official effort to be as far-sighted and positive as possible. As a matter of fact, I think there's a lot of leaning over backwards to even say that detention is not punishment. Personally, I never took this approach. I thought that was kind of conning the ward.

I know darn well that if somebody took me up and locked me up for three hours, I'd feel punished. I just tell the wards and inmates the punitive aspect is one part of it. I said, "This isn't our primary aim, but this is what it is. You're off the streets. You're considered a danger to yourself and to others, at least by others. It's what you do with your time. The facilities are here."

We interviewed at the rate of twenty-five [offenders] a day when we were working on the Youth Authority--because unlike the Adult Authority, whose only function was to determine parole readiness, the YA was in from the time of the initial classification through the ward's program until the discharge.

Sharp: Did there seem to be enough emphasis on rehabilitating the youth?

Barrett: No, but then I think everybody was conscious that there wasn't enough.

Barrett: Recidivism is another question.* But I think that the only way you can keep your perspective when you're working at this is to realize that the community sends the worst that they have, and the ones they've given up working with. Then the success rate that you have in that group is what gives you the encouragement to go on with it.

I think everybody who worked with delinquency--at least the people that I worked most closely with--those supervising parole agents, the parole agents themselves, the counselors in the institution, the superintendents--they were all conscious of the limitations they were working with and they did what they could to get as far as they could within those limitations.

In other words, what I'm saying is I think that everybody wanted the subjects to be rehabilitated. The resistance came from two quarters: one was the subjects themselves and the resistance you got there, and then the fiscal resistance that the workers and therapists had with the administrator.

Sharp: Recidivism was a tremendous problem?

Barrett: It still is. I have no statistics to back me up, but I think that you would be startled if the statistics were developed, in the volume of total crime, how few people--juvenile and adult--do commit the crimes, but commit them again and again.

I believe I've got the citizen's dichotomy: you want the community protected and that is the first mission of the YA, or at least it was, by definition of law, public protection. Rehabilitation came second.

But with institutionalization--the longer they're there, the longer they're apt to be there. We had an institution that was a beautiful institution--very open and relaxing. The guys even went to Boy Scout camp from there--the youngest boys, starting with nine and going to an immature thirteen [years old].

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*Recidivism is a criminological term referring to the tendency to lapse back into prior criminal habits, especially after punishment.

Barrett: Usually these would have had to have been judged delinquent by the court or they couldn't come to the YA. While the law permitted the handling of dependent children, there was no facility given for dependent children. But some of them, you'd really have to stretch to be delinquent and we have them, both boys and girls.

I used to get very irritated. The judge would send a girl who was almost eighteen to us. Like I said, they'd send her to us before she was eighteen for doing what would make her the most popular girl in town after she was eighteen.

But these youngsters would come--the youngest, of course, would be nine, but ten, eleven, too--and they'd settle in and it would be the best home they ever had. They'd be there for thirteen or fourteen months. Then they'd go back to the community and be rejected, sometimes in their own home, and so they'd be back and forth in institutions.

I know one young man who identified emotionally with [Evelyn] Schilling. When she left the board--when I first met him he was in Fricot--when she left the board, he was at DVI [Deuel Vocational Institution], and I last saw him at Vacaville. He was twenty-three years old and he was within six weeks of discharge from the YA.

He came up from out of the solitary unit. I said, "Well, Singer, what do you want to talk about?" I think the World Series was on and he wanted to know how the Series was going, a couple of extraneous questions, and I said, "You know, you really ought to get more serious about this. You're going to be twenty-three in a short while and we're going to give you your get-away money, take you out to the gate, and say goodbye." He started talking about parole. I said, "There will be no parole. We have no more jurisdiction in your case." And then he began to panic. And we first knew him at Fricot.

This is what's known as institutionalization. It breeds recidivism or repeating. We're so familiar with it, but when you asked me to spell it, I was kind of taken aback because it's a word that any of us that have been around, even someone who's been on the perimeter as my wife has been--she went to the institutions with me; my daughters would go. At least three of them went when I was hearing cases. We went to open house at the girls' school at Los Quilicos and things like this. The family is almost as familiar with it as I am.

Barrett: When I went from the YA to the A [Authority] board, I didn't go through the usual orientation because I was familiar with most of the procedures of the A board; they were familiar with me because we all had served on the Board of Corrections together before we got it down to workable size.* So the chairman, Fred Dickson, said, "We need you. I want you to go to Soledad North."

If I'd stayed on the YA board, I'd have gone to Soledad the week after that. I went that time and I again wasn't looking to history, so I didn't keep track, but I know that well over 50 percent of the young men that I saw on the adult side had been seen by me or somebody else on the juvenile side.

Sharp: So the same population was seen over and over again?

Barrett: The population was carrying over. Some of them even had honorable discharges from the YA.

Sharp: Thank you for talking to me about the Youth Authority. The Youth Authority is sort of an invisible structure and you don't always get to have it talked about either in a written history or in an oral history, and so your reflections on it are really very helpful. That's all the questions that I have.

Transcriber: Marie Herold
Final Typist: Marilyn White

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*Mr. Barrett served on the Authority Board from 1965 - 1967.

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Text of AF of L pamphlet supporting Goodwin J. Knight for governor in 1954.

AF of L Committee for Knight

C. J. HAGGERTY
Chairman

THOMAS L. PITTS
Southern California Chairman

995 Market Street, San Francisco, California

Dear Sir and Brother:

The AFL Knight for Governor Committee has important information on the anti-labor record of Richard Graves. We are making part of that record public in this letter. His complete anti-labor record is too long to list on one page, hence the partial presentation.

Let's consider the Graves record during the last session of the state legislature—the 1953 session.

(1) Graves joined hands with the labor-hating Harold Levering to smash the public housing program by breaking the autonomy of local housing authorities. This legislative fight came directly out of Los Angeles where the anti-labor city council sought to nullify housing contracts already negotiated by housing authorities. Labor was 100 per cent against the Levering proposals which Graves championed.

2. He fought an AFL-sponsored bill to grant collective bargaining rights to employees of municipally owned transportation systems.

(3) He opposed an AFL-sponsored bill to make it a misdemeanor to work firemen in excess of 48 hours per week.

(4) He supported a bill to put a killing sales tax on the backs of the working people. The Graves sales tax bill would have forced the people of Los Angeles county to pay an additional $30 million annually; Graves would have forced the people of San Francisco to pay an additional $7 million a year in sales tax. Fortunately, your state AFL trounced Graves in this fight.

We are sure you already know the more notorious parts of Graves' anti-labor record.

But you might not know this. In 1952 this man, who now seeks labor support, came before the Executive Council of the California State Federation of Labor, and asked the state AFL to vote no on proposition No. 10, which would have forbidden chamber of commerce organizations from participating in lobbying activities as long as they were receiving public funds. Needless to mention, the AFL supported Proposition No. 10. This same man now has the audacity to attack the state AFL for refusing to approve and endorse his anti-labor past.

Don't forget, this is the same Mr. Graves who signed the ballot argument against the AFL proposal to reapportion the state senate, who opposed cross filing, and who changed his political party identification five times within recent memory. As we said, this isn't the whole anti-labor story on Graves—but it's enough.

Fraternally yours,

MILTON MAXWELL,
Northern California Chairman

THOMAS L. PITTS,
Southern California Chairman

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William P. Sutherland, Secretary, California State Theatrical Federation.
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Don Riggs, International Representative of Lumber and Sawmill Workers and Carpenters.
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Sal Minerva, Laborers Representative, Richmond.
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Bennie Wegner, Secretary, Culinary Workers, Pittsburg.
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Al Brown, Milk Wagon Drivers, Oakland.
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Howard Barnes, President, Butchers 498.
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Dan Parenti, Musicians.
Ray Flint, Business Agent, Teamsters 150.
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H. S. Clark, Business Agent, Operating Engineers No. 3.
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Walter Federoff, Business Agent, Motion Pictura Operators No. 252.
Walter Silver, President, Stage Hands Local 50.
Sam Bingham, Secretary, Carpenters 2170.
Don Biggs, International Rep., Carpenters, Lbr. & Sawmill Workers.
Coe Hanson, Secretary, Teamsters 912.

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EUREKA	**Albin J. Gruhn,** Secretary, Humboldt County Labor Council.
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Frank Olsen, Business Manager, Building & Construction Trades Council.
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Chet Elliot, Business Rep., Operating Engineers Local 3, San Mateo.
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Glenn L. Dobyns, Operating Engineers Local 3, Santa Rosa.
Stanley C. Maxwell, Teamsters Local 980, Ukiah.
Walter Mason, Laborers Local 139, Ukiah.

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Clarence Brown, Sales Drivers, Food Proc. and Whsmen No. 952, Corona
Austin Regan, Jr., Sugar Refinery Employees No. 20037, Crockett.
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B. C. "Cappy" Du Val, Affiliated Prop'ty Craftsmen No. 44, Hollywood.
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George J. Flaherty, Motion Picture Studio Project. No. 165, Hollywood.
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Kathryn Arnold, Local Jt. Culinary Board, Long Beach.
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George F. Leonard, Beer Drivers No. 203, Los Angeles.
Lew Parrish, Bld. Material & Dump Truck Drivers No. 420, Los Angeles.
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L. L. Sylvaine, Food, Drug, Bev. Whsemen & Cler. Empls. No. 595, L. A.
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James Duncan, Glass Bottle Blowers No. 137, Oakland.
Rex Pritchard, Lathers No. 88, Oakland.
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Lee Johnson, Meat Cutters No. 439, Pasadena.
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Robert Moran, Operating Engineers No. 39, San Francisco.
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Thomas White, Wholesale Liquor Drivers, San Francisco.
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John B. Calisa, Seine and Line Fishermen's Union of the Pacific.
Elsie Jensen, Bartenders & Culinary Workers No. 126, San Rafael.
Elsie Jensen, Central Labor Council, San Rafael.
James F. Trousdale, Plumbers and Pipe Fitters No. 582, Santa Ana.
Robert D. Ussary, Chauffeurs & Teamsters No. 186, Santa Barbara.
Joseph Marciel, Central Labor Council, Santa Maria.
V. A. Harris, Culinary Workers Alliance No. 572, Stockton.
C. S. Cervantes, Brick and Clay Workers No. 874, Stockton.
Edward Davis, Joint Council of Teamsters, Stockton.
Clifford A. Rexinger, Paper Makers No. 320, Stockton.
James Waugh, Cannery Workers of the Pacific, Terminal Island.
William Lockwood, AFL Political Education League, Vallejo.
William Lockwood, Carpenters No. 180, Vallejo.
Wm. MacWhinney, Culinary Workers & Bartenders No. 560, Vallejo.
John S. Catton, Hod Carriers and Laborers No. 326, Vallejo.
Marion F. Northway, Shipwgts. Joiners and Btbuilders No. 1068, Vallejo.
Leo M. McLaughlin, Barbers No. 837, Van Nuys.
George F. Bronner, Central Labor Council, Ventura.
Victor F. Rose, Hod Carriers and Common Laborers No. 585, Ventura.
Albert M. Cox, Motion Picture Operators No. 605, Visalia.
Wm. R. Tattersfield, Carpenters No. 2078, Vista.
Louis W. Smith, Brick and Clay Workers No. 663, Warm Springs.

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TOM BRIGHT

circa 1970

Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library

University of California
Berkeley, California

Governmental History Documentation Project

Goodwin Knight/Edmund Brown, Sr. Era

Tom M. Bright

THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF GOODWIN J. KNIGHT, 1953-1958

An Interview Conducted by
Sarah Sharp
in 1979

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INTERVIEW HISTORY

During the course of the Knight-Brown oral history project we have been able to interview many people on the staffs of both Governors Goodwin J. Knight and Edmund G. Brown, Sr. As a result, much has been learned regarding the operations of the governor's office and about the governors themselves. The interview which follows, a conversation with Tom M. Bright, is a candid portrayal of what it was like to be an administrative secretary on Governor Knight's staff from 1953 to 1958.

Tom Bright met with this interviewer on 31 May 1979 for one short interview session at his spacious ranch-style home situated in a suburb of Sacramento. On what was a very warm summer day, we sat in his pleasant and air-conditioned den. We sipped lemonade and talked about state government, surrounded by photographs of the Brights' grandchildren. Mr. Bright appeared quite tan and healthy, certainly a result of the great deal of golfing that both he and Mrs. Bright are able to do.

Bright was appointed departmental secretary for the governor's office in 1953, shortly after Goodwin Knight took office. Bright brought the experience of an early career in newspaper work and several years in the Department of Motor Vehicles in Sacramento to this position. He candidly described the difficulties of being departmental secretary, dilemmas inherent in the job as well as those a result of Goodwin Knight's approach to governing. As a liaison between the governor and the heads of the various departments, Mr. Bright was supposed to translate ideas for policy back and forth. His comments about this job reveal some of the powerful dynamics present every day in the governor's office. Bright then discussed his other duties as departmental secretary which included listening to the public as they came into the governor's office, and presiding over monthly meetings of the Governor's Council.

Mr. Bright assumed the duties of press secretary in the governor's office in 1955, a post he held until he left to return to the Department of Motor Vehicles in 1958. It was during this period that Governor Knight and a few strong supporters, such as Tom Bright, sent out feelers to test the possibility of Knight's running for either vice-president or president at some point in the future. Mr. Bright had several interesting comments about this experience. Also in 1958, for a short time, he simultaneously held the position of executive secretary during a very tense political time for Governor Knight.

Mr. Bright was most apologetic about his inability to remember certain details about these years in Sacramento. Yet this interviewer, and now future scholars of California political history, have quite a bit more information about Governor Knight and the governor's office from 1953 to 1958 from a unique and inside perspective.

Dr. Sarah Sharp
Interviewer-Editor

25 July 1980
Regional Oral History Office
486 The Bancroft Library
University of California at Berkeley

I BIOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

[Date of Interview: May 31, 1979]##

Sharp: Let's begin with some biographical questions.

I know you were born in Kansas City, and I know you were a newspaperman for some time, but I need to ask you, first of all, what your full name is. We don't have that on our record--

Bright: Tom Moores Bright.

Sharp: Where were you born?

Bright: I was born in Kansas City, Missouri, 3700 Madison Avenue.

Sharp: What was the date?

Bright: February 17, 1907.

Sharp: What were your parents' names?

Bright: My father's name was Thomas Oliver Bright. My mother's name was Helen Mar Moores.

Sharp: Where were they born, do you remember?

Bright: My father was born in Kentucky. I don't know the name of the town. My mother was born in Kansas City, Missouri.

##This symbol indicates that a tape or a segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes see page 39.

Sharp: What was their ethnic background?

Bright: Oh, Scotch, Irish, English. I had a great-grandmother who was very Irish. She was not an immigrant, but she was the next thing to it. [laughter]

Sharp: Do you have any brothers and sisters?

Bright: I have one sister; her name is Helen Virginia Larson. She lives in Denver, Colorado. She's a widow.

Sharp: Is she older, or younger than you?

Bright: She's younger, six years younger than I am.

Sharp: Did you grow up in Kansas City?

Bright: Yes, I went to Norman Grammar School and Westport High School. And, I went to Kansas City Junior College for a couple of years. I went to the University of Kansas for three years.

Sharp: That's at Lawrence?

Bright: That's at Lawrence. I majored in English.

Sharp: Did you have any religious preferences in your family as you were growing up?

Bright: No. My family were all Protestant, but not very religious.

Sharp: So you didn't go to church on Sundays, or--

Bright: Well, when I was little they made me go to Sunday school, but after I got in my teens I never went.

Sharp: When you were young did you like school?

Bright: Yes, I liked school; I made pretty good grades and I enjoyed it. I was a very shy person and, naturally, a good deal smaller than I am now. I got my height after I left high school. I was never very athletic or anything like that.

Sharp: What were some of your favorite subjects in school?

Bright: English, and geography; I hated mathematics.

Sharp: That sounds pretty typical.

Bright: I loved ROTC in high school. I was a cadet captain in ROTC.

Sharp: Did you have books at home?

Bright: Oh yes, many, many. My family have always been great readers and I still am. I'm probably the best customer of the local branch library.

Sharp: That's great. What is your early career history? You went to high school, and then you graduated from KU [University of Kansas]?

Bright: I graduated from KU with an AB degree in English.

Sharp: Then, how did you end up in California?

Bright: Well, it's a long story.

I went to work, first, for the Kansas City Star, the morning edition, the Times. I worked for them for about a year.

Then I had an opportunity to go with a trade paper that had its editorial office in the Board of Trade building at Tenth and Wyandotte Streets [in Kansas City, Missouri]. I went to work there as an assistant to the editor covering the grain, flour, and feed markets. About that time the Depression hit and I was fired.

I got a temporary job with the United Press Associations--the old United Press--in Kansas City. I worked for them off-and-on for several months.

My father-in-law was formerly telegraph editor for the Kansas City Star. He retired, and they moved out to Westwood [California]. Occasionally, he would work for the Santa Monica Outlook and he told me there was an opening out there, on the staff of the Outlook.

I think it was [in] 1932 my wife and I moved out there to Westwood. I covered West Los Angeles for the Santa Monica Outlook for just about a year.

Sharp: That was a local newspaper?

Bright: Yes, it's a daily newspaper.

Then I had a wire from the United Press asking me if I'd like to come back to the Middle West and go to work for them permanently. I jumped at the chance, and we moved back to Kansas City. That was in 1933.

Bright: I worked for the United Press in Kansas City and went from there to Omaha, from there to Des Moines [Iowa], and ultimately we moved to Butte, Montana. I was United Press manager for the state of Montana.

Sharp: You were working your way back west then.

Bright: Working my way back west.

The altitude in Butte was a little high for me, so I got a transfer down to Sacramento. They had an opening in the old KFBK [radio] studio here.

In those days, United Press news wires were rewritten for use on radio. That was my job, to superintend six writers. I managed that little office in the KFBK studios, and we rewrote the whole United Press news wire for use by KFBK. It was a night job. This was about in '38.

Ultimately, the war came along. Newton Stearns, who afterward became Governor [Goodwin J.] Knight's executive secretary, was then working for United Press in the capitol at Sacramento. Newton and I were old friends from our United Press days. He went into the California Air National Guard--I think it was--full-time. So, I had an opportunity to take his job in the capitol. That's when I moved over there to the news side.

In 1942 I went into the navy and was commissioned a lieutenant j.g., spent three years in the navy, came back to United Press in 1947. I worked in what we then called the cables office, in Hollywood, where I briefed a news report for the Honolulu Star-Advertiser and--I forget the name of the other paper there.

Sharp: By the time you got to Sacramento, then, you had plenty of news experience.

Bright: Oh yes. That was really my career, news.

Sharp: We'll get to this, but that must have made your job as press secretary--sort of sitting on the other side of the fence--very interesting.

Bright: I had worked with practically all the people that were in the capitol covering the legislature, and the various state offices. I knew them all personally. I had worked with them as a correspondent myself for a long time. I used to cover the senate here and I knew all these fellows. So, there was no problem about them respecting me, and I respecting them. We got along fine.

II ROLE AS DEPARTMENTAL SECRETARY

General Comments

Sharp: Let's talk about the period of departmental secretary. We know that you were appointed departmental secretary on December 1, 1953. That's just after Goodie Knight became governor, after Earl Warren had gone up to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Bright: Right. I was the deputy director of [the Department of] Motor Vehicles at that time. Paul Mason was a division chief in the department and had been appointed Director of Motor Vehicles as well as legislative secretary by Governor Knight. I had known him since 1947. He asked me if I'd be interested in coming to the governor's office [of Governor Knight].

I'd known Goodie Knight for several years. When I was with the Department of Motor Vehicles, he used to call and ask for a car to take him around. In those days the lieutenant governor had no transportation. He had one secretary, and a small office in the capitol. That was all. He really had no prerogatives of office at all.

So, he [Knight] used to call the department and ask for a car to take him to speaking engagements, and this kind of thing. My immediate boss was then the deputy director, Philip E. Davis. He would assign me to this job, I don't know why. But I got along fine with Goodwin Knight. I drove him around; we had some very pleasant times together. I guess he remembered me and when Paul Mason said, "I've got a fellow out in the department that might make you a departmental secretary," he [Knight] went for it.

Bright: I was a Democrat, mind you. I've been a Democrat all my life. Newton Stearns and I were the only Democrats in the governor's office. Newton ultimately changed his registration to Republican because it became embarrassing to him when he had to go around to various political meetings and he felt that he was an outsider. But I didn't do that; I didn't participate in very many political meetings, so it didn't make much difference in my case.

Sharp: Was it hard working for a Republican while you were a Democrat?

Bright: No. He [Knight] was such a liberal fellow, in my estimation, that I didn't have any feeling of a problem there.

Sharp: When he became governor, in those first few months, and you were then departmental secretary, did he seem to change very much from the period when he had been lieutenant governor and then became governor?

Bright: He seemed to me the same as he always had been. He was always a very friendly, outgoing individual, as you probably know. I didn't notice any change in him. Of course, he had lost his wife and he was a very lonesome individual.* He had very little home life at that time. But things changed after he married again.**

Sharp: Did he spend a lot of time at the capitol when he was not married, when he was a widower?

Bright: Oh yes, a lot of time at the capitol.

Sharp: Weekends, and evenings?

Bright: I can't say weekends so much, but evenings he spent long hours in his office.

Sharp: Some people have told us about what was called skull practice. I was going to bring this up later, but perhaps it might be a good point to introduce now. It was mentioned that this might have been one of his ways of filling up his time.

---

*Goodwin Knight's first wife, Arvilla Cooley Knight, died while Knight was lieutenant governor, in 1952.

**He remarried, to Virginia Carlson, in 1954.

Bright: I'm sure it was, and also, in keeping track of things that were going on. His secretarial staff had contact with so many people that they imparted to him a lot of the problems that they had, and thus kept him aboard.

Sharp: And this was a day-by-day enterprise?

Bright: Yes. Almost every day--

Let me say this, Sarah. I used to work for Governor [Earl] Warren, too, "on loan" in the press office, and the secretarial staff then would pace the halls trying to get to see Warren. They had things that required his decision and it was almost impossible for them to have any contact with him at all. Why, I don't know. But it was very difficult.

With Knight, it was exactly the opposite. If you had something that wouldn't keep, you'd go to Maryalice [Lemmon] and say, "I need to see the governor for two minutes." And he'd be glad to see you.*

Sharp: And she would work you in?

Bright: Oh sure, she'd work you in. She's a good girl. I'm glad you're going to talk to her.

Sharp: So am I. I also am going to talk to Sadie Perlin Groves.**

Bright: Oh good!

Sharp: I'll be talking with her next month.

Bright: Is Sadie still living here?

Sharp: She's in Laguna Niguel, which is south of L.A. So I'll be going down there.

Bright: Oh, is she? Yes, I know where it is. Great.

---

*Maryalice Lemmon handled incoming phone calls and scheduled appointments for Governors Earl Warren, Goodwin Knight, and Edmund G. Brown, Sr.

**Sadie Perlin Groves was Goodwin Knight's personal secretary while he was both lieutenant governor and governor.

Sharp: I'm excited about interviewing her.

What were your first duties, then, as departmental secretary?

Bright: Well, they were practically the same as they were all during the time I was departmental secretary; just being an ombudsman for the governor. I handled virtually all the complaint work; prepared answers to people; assigned out things to the departments when the problems involved any specific department, got the suggested replies back and edited them, and prepared letters for the governor's signature in response.

Of course, I spent a lot of time holding the hands of both the public and the department heads. They had their problems and they'd come to me when they felt that they needed to discuss it with somebody on the governor's staff. If I could help them, I would; if I couldn't, I'd see that they got to see the governor.

Sharp: That's one of the main things that we're interested in.

The role of departmental secretary was begun in 1945. Warren instituted it--

Bright: With Pop [Merrell F.] Small.

Sharp: Yes.

Bright: Incidentally, Pop took my job with United Press when I went into the navy.

Sharp: Oh, he did. Boy, you got all intertwined there! [laughter]

Bright: Yes, we were.

Sharp: It seemed as though, at least to some analysts, that with this position of departmental secretary coming into existence he would then know the department heads, and their needs and their problems, almost better than the governor did, and become a very crucial link between those executive heads and the governor.

Bright: I think that's right. The secretary could spend far more time with the department heads, or their representatives, in discussing problems than the governor could with all the demands upon his time. He just couldn't do it.

I rather hesitate to say this, but Goodwin Knight was not too interested in the details of government; he didn't want to get into the problems of the administration of the various departments any more than he had to.

Bright: He liked to take the broad, overall view of things and determine policy, and leave it up to others to enforce that policy. Probably that's the way to be a good governor; I don't know. I still think Goodwin Knight was one of the best governors we've had since I came to California.

Sharp: That is a remark that has been made by other people as well. In fact, it has been considered a "laissez-faire attitude" towards the legislature. I had not heard it mentioned towards the departments.

Did it seem that he approached the legislature in a similar way as he approached the departments, in this laissez-faire feeling?

Bright: I don't really feel qualified to determine his feeling towards the legislature. Paul Mason would be a better source of information on that than I would.* I've heard him cuss the legislature pretty determinedly at times.

Sharp: So, he did have pretty strong feelings about it.

Bright: Oh yes. I think any governor gets pretty upset at times.

Sharp: Sure. Let me back up a little bit.

I was wondering if you could imagine and then give me an example of a problem that you helped the department head with, whether it was through phone calls, or going to get a cup of coffee and sitting down and working out the problem, and how best to approach it?

Bright: Let me think about that a moment. [pauses] I can't recall any specific examples, Sarah. I probably had more contacts with the Department of Public Works while I was departmental secretary than any other department. Generally, it dealt with construction of freeways in areas where people thought they wanted them, or didn't want them.

Sharp: Freeways were a pretty important development during Goodie Knight's administration, one of the most important examples of what he did during the time that he was governor.

Bright: It's one of his--accomplishments, I guess you could call it--that and the development of the water resources.

---

*Paul Mason was Governor Knight's legislative secretary.

Sharp: Like the Feather River Project?

Bright: Right.

Sharp: With the Department of Public Works, was it then a matter of the head of the department coming and saying, "We have a lot of requests for freeways," and then it was a matter of you taking these requests to Governor Knight and trying to get some legislation on them?

Bright: Right, get his support to go for them.

Sharp: There were governor's bills that came out of the governor's office?

Bright: Yes, very definitely.

Sharp: Is this how legislation came about from the governor?

Bright: I had nothing to do with legislation at all other than conveying the idea to the governor. He would have it drafted by one of his legislative people and they would secure an author who, of course, would be favorable to the governor.

Sharp: Who were these legislative people? Was it just Paul Mason, or--

Bright: No, Paul had Max Gilliss as his assistant. Newt [Newton] Stearns did a lot of personal lobbying for the governor by telephone. He, like I, was well-known by most of the members of the legislature, so he was very effective.

I'm sure Mr. Mason told you that he himself used to be the parliamentarian for the senate, so he was well-known in the legislature.

Sharp: I wondered about this role that you had as sort of a go-between for the departments and the governor. I thought that you might have had something to do with legislation. When these department heads came and talked to you, say about freeway legislation, or something like that, did you then convey these ideas to the appropriate people, like Newt Stearns or Paul Mason?

Bright: This is where the skull session came in. We were all there together. They would hear me speak to the governor directly and they would be aboard on everything. We were all this way; we were a very closely knit group. I knew what Joe [Joseph] Babich's problems were in regard to extraditions and pardons, and this kind of thing. I knew what the research secretary's problems were. We all heard each other discussing these things with the governor during skull sessions.

Sharp: It's interesting; I'm not sure that the governor's office is still run quite like that. You tell me about a pretty intimate group of men who sat down and said, "These are the problems that we've had today. These are the people who are coming to me and telling me what's happening with them."

I think that that's a very unique situation that may be part of that era and is not a part of the era that is now.

Bright: I have no idea, Sarah. I don't know how the governor's office operates now. Maryalice being there, she could probably tell you. I guess she's still there, isn't she?

Sharp: Yes.

Bright: She could probably tell you, but I don't know how they operate.

Ours was, as you say, a very intimate type of thing. Most of the people on the staff called the governor by his first name. It was a very clubby atmosphere.

Sharp: That's certainly the kind of information that is not revealed in somebody's personal papers or something like that.

Bright: I'm sure it wouldn't be.

Sharp: It's invisible, and unless we get it down on tape it's lost. I'm really glad that you are remembering that.

Bright: I was amazed! Having, as I say, worked for Governor Warren and experiencing the difficulty of getting personal contact with him about things that you needed to know, and then ultimately coming over to the Knight administration where everything was relaxed and you had this <u>easy</u> personal contact with the governor--it was a whole different world.

Sharp: Did you have any communications with various lobbyists, for instance the CTA lobbyists?

Bright: No, this wouldn't be a departmental type of activity. This would be either legislative or executive secretary. At that time I didn't even know who the California Teachers Association lobbyist was.

Sharp: Well, let's move on; I have lots of other questions!

How did Goodie Knight get along with his various department heads? Did they have any communication at all?

Bright: Oh yes, they had access to him. They had contact with him at the Governor's Council, which I'm sure you want to know about.

Sharp: Yes.

Bright: Generally speaking, I think he got along pretty well with them.

Frank Durkee, Director of Public Works, was probably the only department head that was fired during his administration that I can recall. I really can't tell you now what the trouble was, Sarah. I do know that he [Knight] asked me to give Frank the word that he no longer was a part of the administration, and I did, and that was the end of it.

##

Sharp: Did Governor Knight explain any kind of expectations that he might have had of the department heads? Was he that formal in his dealings with them?

Bright: Expectations of performance that he wanted from them?

Sharp: Yes.

Bright: Oh yes, yes, indeed. He let them know individually, at the beginning of his administration, what he anticipated from them, but that was a private matter between him and the department heads; I wasn't a part of that.

Sharp: But he did that when he first came into the administration?

Bright: Yes.

Sharp: This was late '53, or did he want until after the 1954 election?

Bright: I believe it was late '53.

Sharp: Okay, so right away as soon as he came on.

Bright: I believe so.

The Governor's Council

Sharp: Let's talk about these Governor's Council meetings.

Bright: Yes, that was one of my responsibilities--to be secretary to the Governor's Council.

Sharp: What was the purpose of these council meetings?

Bright: The same thing as the skull session was for the secretaries; it was a skull session for the department heads so that they could have some idea what was going on in their brother and sister departments.

Sharp: Did legislation come out, or ideas for legislation come out of these meetings?

Bright: I can't recall that any did, but I wouldn't want to say so positively.

In the beginning of the council concept during Governor Knight's administration, each individual department head was asked to report on the things that were going on in their department. And, of course, to make the governor feel good they were almost always favorable, Sarah. Let's not fool ourselves. It was sort of a congratulatory meeting; everybody was telling the governor what a good job they were doing, and expecting his [Knight's] plaudits.

Ultimately it was hard to get the governor to attend these things.

Sharp: Oh, really?

Bright: Yes, he didn't like spending the time; it took two and a half, three hours to go through this whole rigmarole. Unless he had some message of import to give them, he tried to dodge it as much as he could, and he designated me to preside.

Ultimately we went to an abbreviated type of meeting where one or two department heads were asked to make a presentation of some kind just to pep it up a little bit. We wanted to make it not quite so boring and have all of these various reports which, of course, I had to keep notes on and then make a report to the governor. This was a mimeograph thing that was distributed to the press offices and the libraries.

So, we went to this abbreviated type of thing with presentations. It went rather well. I don't know whether they still use that in connection with these agency type of meetings that they have in the governor's office these days, or not.

Sharp: Did these seem important meetings, then, that you were having?

Bright: The Governor's Council meetings?

Sharp: Yes.

Bright: Well, I thought they were because it was part of my job, but I'm sure the governor felt that they were just time-consuming businesses going through the motions.

The Governor's Council was established by law.

Incidentally, you sent me an organization chart of the governor's office, and that's the first one I've ever seen. I don't know where you found it. [laughter]

Sharp: I thought you might get a kick out of that. [laughter]

Bright: I don't think I have ever seen one anywhere before.

Sharp: Well, I changed it around a bit. Actually it came out of a dissertation that somebody did on Governor [Earl] Warren's office.*

Bright: Oh, I see.

Sharp: I crossed out all the Warren's governor's office names and wrote in some of the names that seemed to be active when you were there.

It's interesting; other people and now you have told us about the informal nature of the governor's office. It may have seemed funny to have the whole thing put down on a chart when it didn't really work that way anyway. But--

Bright: It was amazing to me just to see one. I didn't know such a thing even existed. I know when I was in the Department of Motor Vehicles we were constantly revising our organization charts, and we used them. But I certainly never had seen one in the governor's office. Maybe [Newton] Stearns had one put away in his files somewhere. [laughter]

Sharp: It sounds like the Governor's Council took a lot of your time as--

Bright: Oh no, it was only once a month and it wasn't particularly time-consuming.

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*See James Robert Bell, "The Executive Office of the California Governor under Earl Warren, 1943-1953," Ph.D. dissertation (University of California, Berkeley, 1956), pp. 90-91.

Other Duties as Departmental Secretary

Sharp: What took the most of your time?

Bright: Just handling public--I call them complaints. Handling the vast amount of correspondence that passed through there [the governor's office], and the people that would come into the office and want to talk to somebody, didn't care who.

[Madeline] Doty would call me up and say, "Can you see so-and-so? I've got a guy out here that says he's Jesus Christ and he wants to talk about the end of the world."*

Sharp: And you would see these people?

Bright: Oh yes, sure. Somebody has got to talk to them. Unless they were violent; then you'd have to call the state police and have them thrown out. But that didn't occur very often.

Sharp: But there had to be someone in the governor's office who would be an ear?

Bright: Somebody, sure. Generally their complaints were something that was directed toward a department of state government.

It might be a relative of a person in prison that couldn't be handled by the extradition secretary--thought he was being mistreated, or something like this--would be sent to me. And I'd sit and listen to this outpouring and attempt to help them by promising to get in touch with the proper department, and I would. Sometimes you could help them; sometimes there wasn't anything that could be done.

I can recall a member of the governor's investigative staff who had a friend that he wanted to send to the FBI academy, and he wanted an endorsement from the governor. I didn't think it was proper to take this guy out of a state department--he was a state employee--and send him to the FBI academy, because the work that he was doing in the state department had very little to do with anything that the FBI academy would be teaching.

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*Madeline Doty was Governor Knight's receptionist, a position she also held during Governor Warren's administration.

Bright: I spent hours on that with this particular member of the governor's investigative staff who wanted the fellow taken care of. It was very time-consuming. Ultimately, he got his way; he went to the governor, and the governor said, "We'll let him go." So he went.

Sharp: But that took a lot of your time--

Bright: That took a lot of time.

The dictating of letters took an awful lot of time, too.

Sharp: This is answering correspondence that was addressed to Governor Knight, that you were responsible for?

Bright: Yes, [correspondence] that involved some activity of the state departments.

Sharp: I see.

Bright: Hundreds of letters; thousands of letters. That was in the days before they had these automatic typewriters that, now, can do everything but talk--

Sharp: Word processors. Very modern.

Bright: Yes, word processors. [laughter] So, it's no problem at all for them; at least, not as much as it was then. Everything, when I was there, had to be hand typed, and a secretary had to take the dictation and--it was a tough job on a girl, believe me!

Sharp: Did you organize any governor's conferences?

Bright: Several of the governor's conferences on traffic safety.

I was the chairman, for quite a while, of the governor's traffic safety committee. I worked with the Highway Patrol and the Department of Motor Vehicles in setting those things up.

Sharp: What was the purpose of these governor's conferences?

Bright: Well, to bring the general public into the whole picture, and get ideas from them, and convey to them what the state government was doing, or had in mind to do, in regard to problems confronting the state. Well, there were conferences on traffic safety, on employment, on youth, and I think there was a conference on public health.

Sharp: Youth Authority was a very important--

Bright: I worked with Heman Stark [Director, California Youth Authority] on one of those Youth Authority conferences.

Sharp: For instance, if you talk about labor and you had a governor's conference on employment, would you bring in people like Harry Finks* then?

Bright: Oh sure.

Sharp: What would his role then be in a governor's conference on labor?

Bright: He would be the one that was sent out to all these labor organizations, [saying,] "We want you here."

Harry was a great liaison man for labor, just great. He could produce better than anyone, he and Cornelius Haggerty.** But Harry was the man on the spot; you could always depend on him to get labor attendance, or labor endorsement, or whatever you'd need from labor. If Harry would go for it, you know you would get it.

Sharp: Were some of these governor's conferences more political than they were aimed at getting substantive information?

Bright: Everything a governor does has a political aspect to it. I'm sure this is a big part of it.

It [an occasion such as a governor's conference] gives him a big sounding board; a chance to get up and make a speech, and bless them all [laughter], you know. It's an opportunity for expanded public contact for the governor.

People get an invitation from the governor to come to one of these things [and] most of them think it's the greatest thing in the world. They love it. Makes friends.

Sharp: Sure. Well, that is all the questions that I have on your period as departmental secretary, so I thought we'd talk about your role as press secretary.

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*Mr. Finks was on the legislative committee of the California Labor Federation.

**Mr. Haggerty was president of the California Labor Federation.

III ROLE AS PRESS SECRETARY

General Thoughts

Bright: Okay. You want to know when I became press secretary, don't you?

Sharp: Yes, and did you become press secretary right after you ended--?

Bright: Oh yes, just went to one from the other.

September 7, 1955 to--June 30, 1958 was the end of it. And I also had a commission during that time as executive secretary, from March 19, 1958 to June 3, 1958.

Sharp: Oh, I see.

Bright: I was both.

Sharp: We weren't sure about that.

So you became press secretary September--

Bright: Yes, Newt Stearns--let's see. I can't remember who was executive secretary before Newton Stearns. Maybe it was John Synon; I'm not sure.

Sharp: I believe it was.

Bright: Anyway, Newt Stearns became executive secretary and I moved into his press job [as press secretary], at his recommendation.

Sharp: You had had so much experience with the United Press and all that you were the most logical person within the administration at the time to go into that job?

Bright: I guess so. I was very happy to make the switch. I was worn down by that departmental [secretary] thing; after you hear so many sob stories it begins to work on you, so I was glad to become press secretary.

Sharp: What were your duties as press secretary?

Bright: Oh, we had requests for--I'm sure you got this from [Douglas] Barrett too--we had requests for statements, and proclamations.* He [Barrett] did most of that work although I did a little of it.

Sharp: That was the writing?

Bright: The writing, yes.

Handling press requests. We had considerable correspondence from the newspapers, and radio and television.

We did the scripts for the governor's TV shows which we produced right there in what we call the Governor's Council chamber, which is that big room just off the reception room. We had that specially wired for television during my time there.

Sharp: So you were involved in quite a bit of production.

Bright: Quite a bit of production, and quite a bit of traveling with the governor.

My weekends, for some time, were taken up with traveling with him to Los Angeles and San Diego where he put on these "Ask Your Governor" TV shows which you may have heard about. I'd stand by and screen the questions for him, and tutor him when he needed it.

Of course, we had far more press conferences than they do now; we had at least a weekly press conference. That involved briefing the governor ahead of time as to what he might expect in the way of questions, and trying to give him the proper answers for those questions. And then, doing the summaries afterwards; we kept a press conference record afterwards.

They now do it with a court reporter and they can keep a complete record. Ours was only a summary.

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*Mr. Barrett was assistant press secretary under Newton Stearns beginning in October, 1953, when Goodwin Knight became governor.

Bright: I don't know, I seemed to put in a lot of time around there. Maybe it was spinning my wheels, but it seemed like I worked pretty hard.

Sharp: It sounds like you must have worked really hard.

In terms of the relationship between Governor Knight and the press, did he--or did you--attempt to cultivate a certain feeling about the governor to the press?

Bright: I don't know. He had a very fine relationship with the press which I think was personal with him.

Sharp: He was just the kind of man--

Bright: He loved newspapermen; he loved publicity. He knew how to tell stories that would please them.

He had one [story] which he always used with photographers when he was up on a dais someplace. They would shoot off flash bulbs right in his eyes, you know, and he'd say, "Try and get that published, will you?" It always got laughs from photographers, and the general audience as well. He got along better with people than anyone I ever knew.

Sharp: Would he rather tell stories and have this kind of banter with the press than he would talk about legislation, and maybe some of the things that they were interested in?

Bright: Oh, you bet! You bet!

Sharp: Why was that?

Bright: Well, he was just an outgoing person; he would get up and tap dance for them. He was a good soft shoe dancer, you know.

Sharp: That's what I heard.

Bright: It if hit him right, he'd get up and do a little "buck and wing". They loved it.

In recent years I'd see some of the oldtimers like Dick [Richard] Rodda, who is on your [advisory] board, and Al [Alfred] Lyons, who I used to work with back in Kansas City--he ultimately went with the [Sacramento] Bee. They always say, "Gee, if old Goodie were only here things would be a lot different."

And I think they would. He gave you the feeling that everything was right with the world and you were the greatest guy--he made the newspapermen feel that way too.

Sharp: He must have been pretty good to work for.

Bright: And newspaper girls too. We had a few.

He was it; you couldn't ask for a better person to work for. I was delighted to be on his staff.

Sharp: You were press secretary during the Republican national convention in San Francisco. I can see your commemorative plate; Mr. Barrett showed me his plate, too.

Did you cover the convention with the governor?

Bright: No. I really don't know what I was down there for. I never even got to the convention. Never went inside the convention hall. My wife did, but I didn't. I stayed out at the motel where his headquarters were. I answered press questions, and I went with him [Governor Knight] to a press conference downtown, once. But my activities were, you'd say, purely clerical out there.

An Important Eastern Trip

Sharp: There was quite a bit of speculation about who actually was running for vice-president in 1956. I wondered if you handled many questions from the press about this?

Bright: Yes, I did and Governor Knight also had presidential ambitions at one time, too.

Harry Finks and I and Dick [Richard] McKinney took him on an eastern trip in which he sounded out his presidential chances.*

Sharp: Could you tell me more about that trip?

Bright: Sure. What do you want to know about it?

Sharp: I'd like to know where he went, and who you saw.

Bright: Our first stop was in Detroit.

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*Richard McKinney was Governor Knight's travel secretary.

Sharp: When was this now?

Bright: Oh goodness--

Sharp: But before the Republican national convention, before '56.

Bright: Yes, I'm sure it was, Sarah, I'm sure it was.

We went to Detroit first. Mrs. [Virginia] Knight went with us and we traveled by commercial aircraft instead of in "The Grizzly."* Harry Finks went along and Dick McKinney was travel secretary.

He [Knight] spoke to a club in Detroit. I can't remember what the name of it was, but it was a Republican organization. It was like the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco, but I just can't recall the name of it.

And we visited with the labor leaders there and people in the United Auto Workers.

Sharp: Why did you talk to labor?

Bright: You can't get very far, politically, unless you do.

Sharp: Did Mr. Finks think that labor would support Goodie Knight for president?

Bright: I don't know; you'd have to ask him.

Sharp: I did ask him.

Bright: I'm just giving my own personal opinion now, but I don't think Harry thought that Goodwin Knight had a chance. He went through the motions but--

Sharp: But all of this was Governor Knight's idea?

Bright: Oh sure. This wasn't something that Harry was promoting. He went along as an assistant or an aide--a labor advisor.

From there we went to New York. He spoke to another group there, a very large meeting of tycoon types. I can't recall what the name of that was either.

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*"The Grizzly" was the private plane used by California governors.

Bright: Then we went to Newark, New Jersey, and Atlantic City. He made speeches at these places and met with politicians. He met with a New Jersey Senator; he met with [Jacob] Javits in New York.

Sharp: Did Governor Knight think he had a chance to be president?

Bright: Oh, he was just sounding the waters out, see what the chances were. He was enthusiastic about the idea. I don't know whether he was really too serious about it.

Sharp: By '56 did Knight think he had more of a chance of, perhaps, taking the vice-presidential nomination away from Richard Nixon?

Bright: I don't know.

Sharp: It's a real gap in our knowledge about Goodwin Knight--

Bright: [interrupts] I just don't know.

Sharp: Thank you for telling me about that eastern trip. It shows quite a bit more of Knight's personality and his personal desires and his goals.

Bright: It was a very interesting trip, to me, because I was dealing with the metropolitan press there who were far tougher than the western press.

I almost had a riot on my hands in New York; the press were pressing in on him and I just had to take Governor Knight out of the room and quiet them down. I'd never experienced anything like that before.

Sharp: It seemed very ferocious?

Bright: It was almost a mob scene to me in comparison to Sacramento press meetings.

Sharp: And they were assuming that he was definitely running and this is the story that they were trying to get?

Bright: Well, they were trying to get him to declare that he was a candidate--

Sharp: And make some news?

Bright: Yes, but he was very cagey about this.

Bright: We went to see Walter Cronkite while we were there. Walter was an old United Press man; when I was working in Kansas City he was working in St. Louis, so we knew each other. We went to see him and Cronkite gave Knight a nice reception.

I was trying to think what we did down in Newark, New Jersey, but I can't recall whether there was a meeting of any kind or not. I don't believe there was. I think he just met with the Senator from New Jersey at that time, whose name escapes me.

I'll tell you who he met in New York, Sarah. It was the man who was head of American Motors at that time, and ultimately ran as a Republican candidate for president, a Mormon from Salt Lake City. It was George Romney. You know, Goodwin was a Mormon, so they [Knight and Romney] had a connection there. Anyway, Romney met with Knight in his Waldorf Hotel suite and spent quite a lot of time with him. Romney was a strong candidate for president at one time.

Other Press Duties

Sharp: Let me then take you back into California now, and ask you about handling some of the newspapers in California. I ran across an article that was published in the San Francisco Chronicle on November 11, 1956 revealing that Donald Doyle and some other Republicans had received thousands of dollars of insurance premiums from insurance that the Department of Finance had taken out. This was a pretty damaging article for a Republican in the California legislature, and I wondered--

Bright: I have some recollection about that. Was it insurance on the bridges or--?

Sharp: I'm not sure what the insurance was; it was just insurance that the Department of Finance had taken out and--

Bright: I remember it was very embarrassing to Donald Doyle at the time.

Sharp: I would think so. With the insurance the premiums they got annually was quite a sum of money by the time all the premiums were put together.

I wondered how you might have tried to deal with an article that came out like this, about Republicans. Was Donald Doyle a very close friend of Governor Knight?

Bright: Well, I don't recall what the specifics were in regard to the governor. The normal procedure would be that the press would ask me for a statement from the governor. If the governor wanted to make one, we'd issue it. If they asked him at a press conference, he and I would have discussed this ahead of time and we would have devised some kind of an answer that he would be prepared to give.

Sharp: There was a lot of orchestrating then, if you understand my use of the term--

Bright: Yes, programming. Had to be. But you can be sure that Governor Knight would never condone a "cover up" no matter whether a Republican was involved or not.

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Bright: [My job was] to anticipate and prepare the governor for what the press might demand of him.

Sometimes we were very fortunate in being able to do so. I occasionally would ask a friend in the press if they had any ideas as to what the governor was going to be asked on something and I generally would get a response that I could use.

Occasionally we would plant questions ourselves with members of the press. This is a common technique, so there's nothing underhanded about that. I'm sure they do that in the national administration all the time, or leak stuff out. We occasionally would use that technique, too, but not very often.

Multiple Secretarial Assignments

Sharp: I see. Then, you became executive secretary in March of '58 and were only there for about three months.

Bright: Yes. Newt Stearns went on the political side; he left his executive secretary's job to take a leave of absence, that's all, and they wanted somebody to fill in, so I took it.

You asked in your notes about holding the staff meetings and that kind of thing. Really, Sarah, I don't remember <u>ever</u> going to a formal staff meeting of any kind; the skull sessions substituted for that. So, we just continued the same way as we always had. I can't recall doing anything differently as executive secretary than I would have been doing as press secretary. As a matter of fact, I held them both at the same time and did some departmental work, too.

Sharp: I wonder if you could tell us a little about this multiple role playing that everybody seemed to do. Doug Barrett did it quite a bit.

Bright: He did some travel work, he did some research work--when I speak of research, I mean speech writing. He did a lot of that switching back and forth. We all did.

Sharp: Why did this happen that way?

Bright: I don't know; filling in for somebody that was absent for some reason.

As I say, I filled in for Newt Stearns [as press secretary], but I can't remember why Barrett filled in. Pat Martin--you used his name in your notes, C.P. Martin--he had some trouble of some kind. I can't recall what the difficulties were, but he left the Knight administration.

Sharp: He was research secretary?

Bright: Yes.

Sharp: All these people--yourself, John Synon, Paul Mason, Bob Alderman, and Newt Stearns--were all executive secretary at one time.

Bright: Bob Alderman was executive secretary a very short time; he was a carry-over from the [Knight's] lieutenant governor's office where he was sort of administrative assistant.

Sharp: Was this sort of transiency typical of the Earl Warren governor's office as well?

Bright: The Warren governor's office did more borrowing of staff help.

As I recall, they borrowed me on two or three different occasions. I was working under Stearns and Verne Scoggins, who was the press secretary, and doing this proclamations type of writing.

They afterward borrowed a young fellow, Wayne Harbert, who was with Corrections. But I don't recall that they shifted quite as much as we did.

Sharp: Why do you think you shifted so much?

Bright: Maybe it was the informality of the office generally. We all pretty much knew each other's jobs and could do them, and as a matter of convenience did it.

Sharp: And your knowing each other's jobs came as a result of the skull practice sessions?

Bright: Yes, exactly.

Sharp: It's very interesting to me that a governor's office would be so intimately organized, that you would be almost interchangeable in your roles.

Bright: I have to agree. In working in Des Moines [Iowa] where I covered the governor's office, among other things, it was a cut and dried thing. It wasn't as big an organization, naturally, as it was here in California, but everybody had their definite responsibilities and there wasn't any swinging back and forth.

I had a little contact with the capitol in Lincoln occasionally--Lincoln, Nebraska--and it was much the same there; not like California, but much the same as Iowa where it was a very circumscribed type of operation.

Contrasting the Governors' Offices: Earl Warren and Goodwin Knight

Sharp: As you look back on it now, what was the main difference between Governor Warren's office and Governor Knight's office?

Bright: [thoughtfully, to himself] The main difference--? In the personalities, or the operation, or both?

Sharp: Both, I believe.

Bright: Every time I worked in Governor Warren's office, I got the feeling that the people there, both the men and the women, were fearful of Governor Warren. You would hear these stories of the terrible tongue lashings that he would give people. Any crisis would come up, they would scurry around [shaking fist] and give the impression of being fearful of what might happen to them.

In Governor Knight's office there was a relaxed attitude that, to me, was more conducive to good staff work than this tense type of operation that I witnessed in Warren's office.

The press secretary was the major-domo in the Warren office; Verne Scoggins was the king of the hill and he let everybody know it. In the Knight administration the executive secretary, Newton Stearns, was the top man. He gave the governor the advice, politically and otherwise, that he needed to run a good show. He was a fine, strong executive secretary.

Bright: I can't remember the name of the executive secretary in Warren's office now, but I--Sullivan, Frank Sullivan. Sully was a nice fellow but was certainly not a strong character like Newt Stearns was. Verne Scoggins was the top man, no doubt about it. And Warren listened to him, too.

IV 1958: THE "BIG SWITCH"

Sharp: I wonder if we could talk now about 1958.

Bright: Sure.

Sharp: And the "Big Switch." What was the impact of the "Big Switch" on the governor's office?

Bright: A lot of people, myself among them, were disappointed that Governor Knight decided that he could not run without a huge war chest.

I told him, "I think if you come out on the steps of the capitol and talk to the assembled state employees, you could get enough in dollar contributions from your admirers in state government to make a pretty good start on a political campaign."

He threw up his hands and he said to me, "I never made a political race in my life without having the money in the bank before I started and I'm not about to do it now."

So, it was a disappointment that he seemed to back down on this. We felt that he had been euchred out of a possible another term.

I felt pretty keenly about it so--I didn't see any future there--so I went back to my old civil service job on the fifth of July, 1958. [pauses] And with his [Knight's] concurrence; he offered no objection to it. Walter Barkdull took the press job. Walter was sort of a press man over in the Department of Corrections, and he did a good job for the remainder of the term. He's still in the government--in the Department of Corrections.

Sharp: I'm trying to imagine how the "Big Switch" came about. We know that Knowland decided he wouldn't run for re-election for U.S. Senator and then he decided that he would run for governor--

Bright: Yes.

Sharp: While Governor Knight was going to run for re-election. And then Governor Knight by--I'm not sure--1958--

Bright: The governor went back to Washington to see [Vice-president Richard] Nixon and Nixon turned thumbs down on him, so he decided he would run for [U.S.] Senator.

Sharp: When Knight was telling you that he couldn't run when he wasn't sure that he had enough money--monetary support--did you expect that from him?

Bright: No, I didn't expect him to say that.

Sharp: You thought he would just run anyway?

Bright: I thought that--I had hoped that he would make the race without getting a so-called war chest of political contributions ahead of time. Maybe I was naïve, but he certainly didn't feel that way; he couldn't see it.

Sharp: Did you know Mrs. Knight very well?

Bright: Oh yes.

Sharp: What did she think about the "Big Switch" and his dropping out of the race for governor?

Bright: Anything the governor did was all right with Virginia. I'm sure that she was all for it.

She was a great gal, and was good for him, real good for him. He was a changed man after they married--for the better, I might say. She was real good for him. I was at their wedding; that was quite an experience, too.

They were married in Beverly Hills and--Al [Alfred M.] Calais, who was one of the travel secretaries, set up the whole wedding. He wanted me there to backstop him, so I went down, but I really didn't have very much to do. There was a little bit of press around, but they didn't give us any problem except one of them. I can't remember the name of the church, but there was a balcony up in the rear, as so many churches have, where the choir usually performs. One of them [the press] sneaked in and got up there and was going to take pictures. I had to chase him out of there. The governor didn't want any pictures inside the church. I don't know why, but he didn't want any.

Sharp: I have seen, in the papers of Governor Knight that are collected at Stanford, some memos addressed to you from Newt Stearns regarding the '58 campaign. I wondered if you had any role in either the running for re-election, or for the race for U.S. Senator?

Bright: No. I just don't recall anything. Were they--

Sharp: It was just one. It was from Newt Stearns and it had to do with some of the plans, but I couldn't tell--it wasn't very complete--

Bright: Well, naturally, about all I would be interested in as a press secretary would be the itineraries for Knight's political appearances--

Sharp: Maybe that's what it was.

Bright: And it might be that Newt notified me so I could tell the press where he was going to be. You see, since I left early in July I didn't have too much to do with the actual campaign.

Sharp: Well, that just about covers the questions that I had, but I wondered if--

Bright: I might say, in regard to that "Big Switch," I was here in Sacramento while they [the Knights] were down in Arizona at the Arizona Biltmore [Hotel] with [Clem] Whitaker and [Leone] Baxter, and Stearns. At least it seemed to me like I was here in Sacramento practically alone, because I had the whole press from all over the West on my back wanting to know what in the devil was going on and where the Knights were, and I knew where they were, but I couldn't tell anybody since the governor did not want his whereabouts revealed.

I was getting calls, practically around the clock. I remember several nights being awakened up here, at home, by calls from the East wanting to know what the governor was up to.

Sharp: You mean, Washington?

Bright: Yes.

Sharp: From whom?

Bright: Newspaper people back there; some of the columnists. You know, they wanted to know what the picture was.

I felt a great deal of pressure during that time, not only from the local people but from outside people as well.

Bright: Of course, I was talking back and forth with the governor, who was calling me wanting to know what the situation was, "What do you hear?" "What are people saying?"

Sharp: That must have been a very difficult position to manage.

Bright: It was a difficult time.

Sharp: Did the governor expect that you would be able to summarize the situation and give him some advice about what the tone was up here?

Bright: Well, he wanted to know what the public reaction was to his--we didn't call it the "Big Switch" but we called it his something "in the desert"; I've forgotten now what it was.

He wanted to know what people were saying, what their reaction was to his knuckling under to Knowland, and this kind of thing.

Sharp: Was all of this before he had actually decided to run, for U.S. Senator? Was he still--

Bright: He was still hiding out in Arizona.

Sharp: So he was still trying to make up his mind whether or not to run for Senator?

Bright: Yes, I think so.

Sharp: Did anything that you would tell him sway--?

Bright: Oh, I'm sure it didn't because I didn't really have too much to give him on it, Sarah, other than my own personal feeling that he had enough charisma among the public to make a good race with very little money. I still think I was right.

Sharp: I think a lot of other people do too.

V ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS ON THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

Bright: Incidentally, on those papers at Stanford, I was invited down there, but I couldn't go at the time. I'm sorry I couldn't. Mrs. Knight sent me an invitation to come down. They were going to have a little ceremony, and so forth. There was a number of people there, I understand, but I missed it.

Sharp: Yes. I've done quite a bit of research, mostly for preparing for these interviews, and his papers are so complete; I've never seen anything like it. It's very amazing.

Bright: Is that right? I'm glad to hear that. Are they available to anyone that--?

Sharp: Anyone. There have been some papers written based on the Knight collection of personal papers; by papers I mean Master's theses.

Bright: I wish you had come to me sooner on this; my memory would have been better than it is now.

Sharp: That's usually the problem, but you--

Bright: Twenty or twenty-five years, and I've had all this in the interim--I had a big scandal in my Department of Motor Vehicles; that was very upsetting to me--so, I've had all this stuff in the interim and the governor's office seems very hazy, way back then.

Sharp: Well, it may seem hazy to you, but the fact that we, obviously, cannot talk to Governor Knight means we need to talk to these other people who surrounded him. When we sit down and put it all together, we do begin to see what was happening.

Bright: I imagine you get a pretty good picture.

Sharp: And we're not interested in the "grand vision and policy"; we're interested in the day-to-day running of the governor's office in the 1950s. And that's what we're getting; that's what you remember.

Bright: Oh, sure. I can visualize that, but I can't remember what the big issues of the day were outside of water, and--

Sharp: Highways and oil?

Bright: Highways, and yes, oil. Labor was always pushing for greater unemployment benefits. That took up a lot of the governor's time.

Sharp: Was Mr. Finks there, in the governor's office, often?

Bright: Mr. Finks had absolute carte blanche in the governor's office.

Sharp: Why?

Bright: He didn't have to go through the--

Sharp: Maryalice [Lemmon]?

Bright: Maryalice or Mrs. Doty or any of that. He just wandered in.

Sharp: Why is that?

Bright: He convinced the governor that he was a good labor advisor and--

Sharp: He was right.

Bright: He was right, sure.

He'd drop in and [say], "Hi ya, broder" [Bright imitates Finks's speech] and sit down and put his feet on the desk; we'd talk there for hours, if he wanted to.

Sharp: The right-to-work issue that came up and was really the crux of the difference between William Knowland and Goodwin Knight really was a much earlier issue than 1958; it came up in 1954, actually, when Goodwin Knight was first running for governor.

Bright: Yes, I believe you're right.

Sharp: Early, by '54, and even earlier than that, Goodwin Knight had come alongside labor very intimately.

Bright: Oh, he embraced labor; there's no doubt about that.

Sharp: Does that seem sort of a "not a very Republican thing to do," or does it seem in keeping with--

Bright: It doesn't seem in keeping with the general Republican philosophy, I'll grant you that, but--

Sharp: But it is in keeping with Goodwin Knight?

Bright: Oh, yes. He was a liberal in many respects, I think. He may have been milking Harry, or labor, for all he could get out of them--I don't know--but he seemed--

Sharp: Labor represents a lot of votes.

Bright: Sure. Knight seemed to respect Neil Haggerty; I'm sure that he felt Haggerty was an outstanding man. I think he respected Harry Finks. Harry was a different type of individual, but the governor certainly relied on him.

Sharp: Labor made pretty tremendous gains in the legislative sessions when Goodwin Knight was governor.

Bright: You bet they did.

Sharp: Unemployment benefits, disability benefits, and many other things as well.

Bright: True.

Sharp: It's a pretty remarkable record.

Bright: And, you know, Harry Finks was probably responsible for a good part of it.

Sharp: Well, I think that's all the questions that I have.

I wondered if you had any other comments that you wanted to make about the governor's office, and your being in the governor's office? You certainly saw it from various angles.

Bright: One of the things you asked me about over the phone was tidelands oil and I really don't remember too much about that.

Sharp: I didn't think you did, so that's why I didn't bring it up this morning.

Bright: Oh! Alcoholic beverage--Knight's first research secretary was Malcolm E. Harris. Malcolm took a great interest in this legislation for alcoholic beverage control.

Sharp: He later became a lobbyist for the Distilled Spirits Institute.

Bright: Oh, yes. He's recently retired from the Institute. He had a fine job with them, back East, and he's living in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, I think it is.

Anyway, Malcolm took a great interest in liquor control and worked--maybe it was with Caspar Weinberger; I don't remember--but worked on the legislation and did such a fine job on it that Goodwin Knight appointed him director of Alcoholic Beverage Control, and from there he stepped up to this other job.

Sharp: Now, before the ABC was responsible for licensing, the Board of Equalization handled liquor licensing.

Bright: Right. They had this member that was accused of selling liquor licenses. He was William Bonelli. He ran off to Mexico and he died down there. As I recall, he was never brought to trial. It was a great scandal, and they held up his retirement allowance because he had this hanging over his head. After his death, I believe his widow received the allowance.

Sharp: Did you work with the development of the ABC while you were a departmental secretary?

Bright: Give me that again.

Sharp: Did you help work on the development of the ABC while you were departmental secretary?

Bright: No, this was all Harris's work.

Sharp: As research secretary?

Bright: Yes. I don't know how it became his responsibility.

Sharp: Wouldn't seem likely.

Bright: You'd think it would be more legislative, but he took a great interest in this and worked with the author of the legislation, who I guess was Caspar Weinberger, but I can't remember. Anyway, Harris did such a fine job that Goodwin Knight appointed him director.

Sharp: I had one other question in terms of organization of the departments.

When Pat Brown became governor, he reorganized many of the state departments almost immediately. I wonder if you and Governor Knight talked about any kinds of reorganization?

Bright: No. No, this business of the agency type of organization came completely under Pat Brown. We never even discussed putting group heads over the various directors.

I still like the departmental concept better, but the agency thing has held on. You have these super czars that, theoretically, manage the various departments. It subjugates the department heads, and I don't think it's good. But it works.

I noticed here, Sarah, that you do not have anything about a chap named Theodore H. Jenner. To my mind he's the best departmental [secretary] that ever operated in the governor's office. He did far more work than I did.

Sharp: And he was after you?

Bright: He succeeded me. He came out of the controller's office. He's the former state president of CSEA*, and a very, very fine departmental secretary. He had those departments working like a charm. I was kind of wondering why you didn't have him.

Hans Morkisch came after I was there. I met him once, but I don't know him.

Sharp: What secretary was he?

Bright: He was the travel secretary; he worked with Verne Tobin.

##

Sharp: Well, I think that's all of the questions that I have.

Bright: It was a good operation, down there. So good that many of the people have been kept on, like Maryalice [Lemmon], and Jackie Habecker, who is now [Governor Edmund G., Jr.] Jerry Brown's reception secretary. She was part of the crew.

I think you asked me about Mrs. Anderson, didn't you? [leafing through notes] Yes, you wanted to know about Alice Anderson. She was the clerical office manager for a while. She ultimately was succeeded by Bernice Smith, who was Mr. [Paul] Mason's secretary.

---

*California State Employees Association.

Sharp: Well, I think that's all the questions. You surely remembered the right things as far as I'm concerned!

Bright: Well, good. I'm happy to be of some help.

Transcriber: Nicole Bouché
Final Typist: Marilyn White

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Governmental History Documentation Project
Goodwin Knight/Edmund Brown, Sr. Era

Sadie Perlin Groves

A CAREER AS PRIVATE SECRETARY TO GOODWIN KNIGHT, 1952-1958

An Interview Conducted by
Sarah Sharp
in 1979

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INTERVIEW HISTORY

As with the other interviews included in this volume, the governor's office during the administration of Goodwin Knight, from 1953 through 1958, was also the subject of this interview. Sadie Perlin Groves was personal secretary for Goodwin Knight actually from 1952 through 1958, a period which also included Knight's last year as lieutenant governor under Earl Warren. Mrs. Groves's interview adds very personal and gentle recollections of these years, Goodwin Knight, and the operations of the governor's office.

Mrs. Groves met with the present interviewer-editor on 27 June 1979 for one afternoon session at the former's home in Laguna Niguel, California, a small ocean community an hour's drive south of Los Angeles. Dressed in a summery yellow pantsuit, Mrs. Groves was a bright contrast to the warm, subtle tones of the formal living room in which we sat and talked about her years in Sacramento. At the request of the interviewer-editor, she had taken the time to make notes of what her duties had been as Knight's secretary, to which she referred as we talked. However, a modest and quiet woman, Mrs. Groves occasionally doubted that she had anything to contribute on the subject of the governor's office. Yet she documented very well, by use of lively anecdotes, the kind of secretary she was and how she had assisted Goodwin Knight on a daily basis. She proved her great competence as his secretary by being named "National Secretary of the Year" by the Underwood Typewriter Company in 1957.

Mrs. Groves read through her transcript of this interview, after I had edited it slightly for clarity. She then directed a small amount of additional editing. In all, Mrs. Groves's interview adds much to tell future students of California political history about the manner of man which Goodwin Knight was.

Dr. Sarah Sharp
Interviewer-Editor

22 August 1980
Regional Oral History Office
486 The Bancroft Library
University of California at Berkeley

Regional Oral History Office
Room 486
The Bancroft Library
University of California
Berkeley, California 94720

Governmental History Documentation Project Interviewee

Your full name SADIE ELIZABETH (PERLIN) GROVES

Date of birth 7/26/16

Father's full name MITCHELL PERLIN

Father's place of birth JUGOSLAVIA

Mother's full name MAY PERLIN

Mother's place of birth JUGOSLAVIA

Where did you grow up? LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Education HIGH SCHOOL

Early employment David L. Loew, Inc. (film studio); Internal Revenue Service; State Personnel Board; State Highway dept. and Highway Commission(both departments under State Public Works).

Positions held in state government State Personnel Board; Division of Highways; State Highway Commission; Lt. Governor's Office; Governor's Office.

Employment after leaving state government - 0 -

I BIOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND AND EARLY WORK EXPERIENCE

[Date of Interview: June 27, 1979]##

Sharp: Now, I have asked you some questions on our preliminary sheet, but I did have a few more that I wanted to ask. I thought we just might go ahead and start with those. Do you have any brothers and sisters?

Groves: I have two sisters. I have one that is not adopted, but my mother and dad got my other sister when she was fourteen months old. A living uncle wouldn't permit us to adopt her. We raised her and she is, to me, my sister.

Sharp: What is her name?

Groves: Her name is Helen Katich, a good Yugoslav name.

Sharp: Oh, it is!

Groves: Since my parents are Yugoslav, and she married a Yugoslav boy. And so did my other sister who lives just down the hill.

Sharp: What is her name?

Groves: We all call her Babe; it's Violet, which we detest. I'll have to spell this out. It's Samardzich. [spells name] That's a long one. You've probably never been around Yugoslav people.

Sharp: Well, I've been around Polish, so--

##This symbol indicates that a tape or a segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes see page 45.

Groves: Well, that's just as bad too. But the Yugoslavs--some--have long names. I derived the name Perlin from my father. In Yugoslavia it's Perlain. My father came to this country--Butte, Montana--as a very young boy. He wanted to get his citizenship papers and a cousin had taken him to court to get his citizenship papers since my father was still not able to speak fluent English, yet. The judge said, "What is your name?" The cousin said, "Perlin." He [the judge] said, "How do you spell it?" "Perlin." [speaking for the cousin]

So that's how we got the name Perlin.

Sharp: That's done quite a bit, I understand.

Groves: Well, my name's Sadie Elizabeth, which I gave you on here. [points to sheet] My father wanted me to be called Elizabeth. I was christened with a Serbian name, which was Saveta. Somewhere in there [points to materials sent to her by interviewer] I found somebody had given you that name.

Sharp: That's right.

Groves: I don't know where it came from.

Sharp: Well, actually, I had gotten it out of the California Blue Book.

Groves: Oh, really.

Sharp: In the Blue Book it's Saveta. I thought the pronunciation was "Saveeta." That's the spelling of your name that shows up in the Blue Book, and I was pretty sure that you were the same person.

Groves: Well, the only one that could have done that was Bob [Robert] Alderman, who, as I said, was the executive secretary when we first came to Sacramento. He didn't like the name Sadie <u>at all</u>. He said, "My gosh, couldn't your parents have given you another name?"

So I told him what had happened, and he said, "Well, let's call you Saveta. That's not too good either, but it's better than Sadie."

I said, "Well, that's even worse!" And to change my name to Elizabeth--it was too late. I said, "I'm a grown woman now. I'm not going to go by the name of Elizabeth; no one would know me."

Groves: So, that may have come from him [Bob Alderman]. That's the only person that I know that would have done that. Plus the fact that we had a Jewish man--I think he was a lobbyist--with the name Perlin. Apparently there are Jewish people with that name. He went to Bob Alderman and asked if he could get me to join their church.

And I said, "I am not Jewish, please." I used to get mail from Eddie Cantor's funds, and all that, because of that name. So, I always have to explain how I got that name.

Sharp: Did you have any religious influences in your family when you were growing up, then?

Groves: We belonged to the Serbian Orthodox Church, which is Saint Stephen's, in Alhambra, [California]. We don't go. My husband, of course, doesn't understand the language and part of the services are in Serbian--but predominantly in English, now. Because of the distance--this is in East Los Angeles--we don't get over there that often. But my mother used to take us when we were small children, but that's about the extent of it.

Sharp: Did you like school when you were growing up?

Groves: Oh, yes.

Sharp: Was there anything about it that you especially liked?

Groves: I got along well with the teachers, and I got along well with all the children. I went through grammar school and high school with almost the same group of children, except for my senior year. We moved from Inglewood to Los Angeles and bought a home in Los Angeles, and I went to Manual Arts, [the] same high school as Governor Knight, which was a coincidence we found out about.

Sharp: He was there, then, quite a bit before you were there.

Groves: Oh yes, many years. Almost twenty, I think.

Sharp: I wonder if you would know another woman whom we interviewed; that's Dorothy Hewes Bell.

Groves: That name rings a bell.

Sharp: She was with Governor Knight at Manual Arts High School, and they were just close friends. Then, eventually, she did help him in a couple of his campaigns. That's why we interviewed her. Her name might have crossed your desk a couple of times.

Groves: Oh yes, that's probably where I get the name. It sounds very familiar.

And that's all. I didn't go on to college. I was anxious to get out in the working world, you know.

Sharp: I can understand that.

Groves: To have money of my own. I had big ideas, but they didn't always materialize because when I started working, salaries weren't that great. I went to work in the movie studios--I'm trying to remember the year now--well, it was in the late thirties, and I was earning, I think, eighteen [dollars] a week--to start with. I made a big fuss over it and finally they gave me twenty. [laughter]

Sharp: Oh, my. I'm sure that probably went further then than now.

Groves: It might have, then. I had been working for some years before I went to work for Governor [Goodwin] Knight. After I worked a while, I had decided that--and I loved San Francisco--it would be nice to be able to move out on my own.

My father had three daughters and he was pretty strict, but a very loving and kind man, and everything was for his family. He did everything for his family that was possible. He didn't believe that I could get out on my own at this particular age, but I was determined. I wanted to go to San Francisco and have my own apartment, and work there.

So, I had contacted a friend of the governor's who was then working in San Francisco--he was an attorney. He invited me out to lunch and we talked over what I wanted to do. He said, "Well, Sadie, I don't think you can make it, living here on the salary that you would get."

So, he took me into the office of his secretary. She was earning something like $100 a week for all this advanced work she was doing. She had books--legal books--and stacks of correspondence and things that she was handling. I said, "How can you live here on that amount of money?"

"You can't do it," he says, "That's why I'm trying to discourage you. I don't think you're going to make it here."

So I decided to give that idea up. And, of course, it wasn't too many years after when I finally became Governor Knight's [secretary] and I <u>did</u> move and had my own apartment.

II WORKING AS LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR KNIGHT'S PERSONAL SECRETARY

First Duties

Sharp: How did you become Lieutenant Governor Knight's secretary?

Groves: The governor [Goodwin Knight] had had a woman in his office who was an elderly woman. She was doing secretarial work which I did when I went into the office. I don't know whether I should tell you this, but I guess she began to get on his nerves a little bit. He had lost his wife and she kept sympathizing with him every night and telling him he should go home, and go to bed, and get some rest, and telling him what to eat.* And, I guess, after a while this really got to him; he couldn't take it. So he decided that they would let her go.

In the meantime, they had been looking for someone who worked in the office and, apparently, had talked to various people in the state asking if they could recommend anyone. I had been recommended by several people and I was working for the Highway Commission at the time. I wasn't too happy with what I was doing, so I was interested in anything else that I could get.

So, Bob Alderman called me. I didn't know him from anyone else in the lieutenant governor's office. He said that I had been recommended and they needed the girl in the office. Would I be interested in coming in for an interview?

---

*Arvilla Cooley Knight, Goodwin Knight's first wife, died in 1952 while Knight was lieutenant governor.

Groves: I said, "Oh, I thought I would." He said, "Well, fine. We'll set up an appointment," and I went in to see him.

After the interview he said, "When can you come to work? Can you come in next week?" I said, "Oh, I can't do that. I have to, at least, give them two weeks notice over there. It wouldn't be fair."

So he said, "Fine, but make it as soon as possible." He accepted me immediately.

Sharp: Did you get to meet Lieutenant Governor Knight then?

Groves: Yes.

Sharp: But only after the interview with Bob Alderman?

Groves: After the interview, yes. Bob made the decision as to who was going to work in the office. So, I went to work about two weeks later. Of course, at that time we worked mainly on letters of thank you for condolences that had been received. There were just stacks; there were hundreds of them. We started sending out letters to people, thanking them for all their kind notes.

Sharp: So that was your first job, really, as Knight's secretary.

Groves: Yes, right.

Sharp: What were your first impressions of Lieutenant Governor Knight?

Groves: Well, first I just went into the office and I thought, good grief! I'm working for the lieutenant governor! I can't believe it. And I thought, well, I don't even know--should I call him governor? Should I call him lieutenant governor? I really didn't know that much about politics. I was really a little green. So, I found out that he was addressed as governor regardless of whether he was governor or lieutenant governor.

So, he [Lieutenant Governor Knight] came out and was very happy to see me, and called me into his office with the pretense that I was to take dictation from him. That's what Bob Alderman thought I was going to be doing because he said, "The governor has some letters that he <u>should</u> dictate and they should go out today."

Well, I went in there and we spent most of two or three hours just talking about me, and talking about him. And, of course, he talked for a long time about his late wife. He just hadn't adapted to the idea that she was gone.

Sharp: How long had she been dead by the time you came?

Groves: She passed away in October--I think it was in October--and I came in December. So, it hadn't been too long.

Sharp: And this is 1952.

Groves: Yes. So, it was all, you know, very fresh in his mind. They had been married--I don't know at that time exactly how many years--but they were a very devoted couple and, of course, they had the two girls.* He was a very devoted husband and father. So, he spent a lot of time talking about his wife, and how much he missed her. And he talked about the girls.

So, I came out of the office and Bob Alderman said, "Did he dictate the--"

I said, "No, he didn't."

"You mean you've been in there for three hours and he hasn't dictated one letter?!"

I said, "I'm sorry, Mr. Alderman. I couldn't do anything about it. After all, he is the governor. I can't tell him what he should do."

Sharp: Really!

Groves: Said Bob, "We're never going to get anywhere this way."

So then, Bob Alderman proceeded to dictate a lot of letters to me. And, on occasion, the governor would call me in to sit down and he would dictate. But in the interim he would also go back to talking about his wife and his daughters.

Sharp: It was pretty important for him to talk about all this then.

Groves: Oh yes, it was. Very. I never asked any questions; I let him just go ahead and talk, and I sympathized, but not to the extent where he felt I was getting personal anyway. I felt very sorry for him because it was terribly hard on him.

---

*Arvilla and Goodwin Knight had two daughters, Carolyn and Marilyn.

Groves: Anyway, we continued on in the office with Bob Alderman--you know, dictating. The governor would take off, maybe, on a speaking tour and at times maybe Bob would go with him, or have other things that he would tend to outside the office where I would be alone because we had small quarters.

Sharp: That's what I understand. It was a very small staff.

Groves. Yes, it was. Just three of us.

Sharp: That's very small.

Groves: Yes, that is, for a lieutenant governor. But then, a lieutenant governor is almost like a vice-president. He doesn't carry that amount of weight. I think the reason Governor Knight did, at the time, was because he had been known in Los Angeles for so long as, first, an attorney, then a judge. He was always giving talks in various and sundry places. So people pretty well knew him. He had a lot of engagements to fill, throughout the state.

The Office Routine

Sharp: What was your daily schedule like once it got back to normal after this period of mourning? What was the daily routine?

Groves: Well, if the governor was coming into the office, you had going through the mail, sorting and dividing it by what went to Bob Alderman, and what went to the governor. Then, you were taking dictation from Bob Alderman for the letters, and writing notes of thank you to people for their letters of condolence. That was the general idea. Taking care of the banking and any outside errands that were to be done.

Then, sometime in January the legislative session started and the three of us went to Sacramento for the entire session, where he had an office in the capitol, right opposite the senate. We had a girl, who became a very good friend of mine--we're still very good friends. She helped in the office.

Sharp: What was her name?

Groves: Elizabeth Spaulding.

Sharp: But in this initial period, then, you were in Los Angeles?

Groves: Yes.

Sharp: And then you went to Sacramento. Did you then return to Los Angeles after the legislative session was over?

Groves: Yes, that's right. That ended in June, and then we came back and were in the office until October.

Sharp: So you had to go up there and look for an apartment and--?

Groves: No. You see, there was their [legislative] recess in February, so I stayed in the hotel when we first went up. Then there was this [summer] recess, and then we went back. Then I found an apartment, because I knew we'd be there for at least three months. I took an apartment and walked to work, which was nice, walking through the state capital.

Sharp: Those are beautiful grounds.

Groves: Oh yes, just absolutely gorgeous.

Sharp: I don't know what they looked like then, but now the different kinds of trees and everything and all the different flowers just make it lovely.

Groves: Of course, then they had them. I lived probably half a mile from the capitol, but when we came back permanently I lived in the Senator Hotel for a little over a month, until I began climbing the walls. I couldn't stand it, and I didn't know too, too many people except the woman that I worked with. She sort of took me under a wing and took me out to her home. Through her I met a lot of people around the legislature.

Then, I took an apartment across the street from the capitol and remained there all through Governor Knight's governorship [and] until I married. And we stayed there until we moved here.

Sharp: Did you work with Helen MacGregor on any duties?

Groves: No. Helen MacGregor was Governor [Earl] Warren's private secretary.

Sharp: Yes. I just wondered if you had any contact with her at all.

Groves: No, I didn't. None whatsoever. I only met her when she came in to visit with some of the girls in the office, particularly the girl who was my secretary and was a good friend of hers. She had been Miss MacGregor's secretary.

Sharp: The woman who was your secretary, was that--

Groves: Wilma Wagner.

Sharp: Can you tell us anything about the relationship between Earl Warren and Goodwin Knight? We understand that it wasn't a very warm relationship.

Groves: No, it wasn't.

Sharp: And I don't know what that means in terms of personalities of people--

Groves: I really don't want to go into it because I don't think that Virginia [Knight] has.* I notice, what I've read [of] what Virginia had given you--Was that part of what she'd written for--

Sharp: For the dedication of the papers?

Groves: Yes. Did she go into this [relationship between Warren and Knight] with you at all?

Sharp: I don't think so. I did ask her, but because she didn't know Goodwin Knight until pretty much after the working relationship with Earl Warren was over, she didn't think she had too much to contribute about it.

Groves: Now, there could have been a lot more behind it because it didn't seem quite logical that their friendship should be so cool for this one reason that I know of, that the governor had told me.

[Page 10a of the manuscript is under seal until 27 June 2010]

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*Virginia Knight is Goodwin Knight's second wife.

Sharp: Well, because Knight and Warren were of the same political party there was, perhaps, a certain amount of rivalry there. We do know, for instance, that there were some Republicans who were dissatisfied with Governor Warren and made overtures to Goodwin Knight to run against Earl Warren. That couldn't have set too well with Earl Warren.

Groves: No, that's right.

Sharp: I'm sure that Governor Warren must have known about it. And, from what we understand, Earl Warren and Goodwin Knight were just two really different people.

Groves: Oh, completely so, from what I know and heard about Governor Warren from the girls who were on the staff when we came in.

Sharp: From what especially some of the office people have told us, Governor Knight, as lieutenant governor and as governor, was just an extremely jovial man.

Groves: Oh, very! He was a gregarious and lively man, and loved people. I don't think that [Earl] Warren was that way, at all. Now, a lot of my information about Warren came from Maryalice [Lemmon] because she had worked there with him. He was not a man that made friends easily, or was especially kind to the staff.

Sharp: Did Governor Warren ever come to the lieutenant governor's office?

Groves: No, never. The only time he came was after he became chief justice. He came back to visit some of the girls and I think, if my memory serves me right--I believe he had an appointment to see the governor, just to come in; just a casual visit, nothing else.

III THE CHANGE OVER TO BEING GOVERNOR KNIGHT'S PRIVATE SECRETARY

Beginning Again

Sharp: Do you recall the day when you found out that Earl Warren had been appointed chief justice?

Groves: Oh my, yes! To coin a phrase, all hell broke loose! [laughter]

Sharp: I can imagine!

Groves: We were so, oh, excited in the office!

Sharp: Had you anticipated that something--

Groves: Yes, I think that we had. I could get just little rumblings. I wasn't told directly, but I got little rumblings that there was going to be a change in the Sacramento governor's office.

Sharp: What went on inside you when you found out that--

Groves: Well, I began to wonder, was I going to be asked to go along, or was I going to be ignored, you know?--because no one had said anything to me.

After Warren had been named chief justice, and Knight was to walk in as governor, Governor Knight passed by my desk one day shortly before we were to move--or, he was to make the move--he came by and he said, "Sadie, are you going to Sacramento with us?" He didn't say, "You are." He just said, "Are you going?" I said, "Well, I'd certainly like to." But in the meantime, Bob Alderman had asked me to go.

Groves: I liked the man [Alderman] very much. We got along beautifully; we never had a problem. He had a lot of respect for me. He couldn't have been nicer, and he said many, many nice things to me through correspondence later on. I felt badly that he left under not good conditions when we were in the governor's office. It came as a complete surprise.

Everyone else seemed to know what was going on. I must have been pretty naïve. I walked into his [Alderman's] office one day, which was the office that I took over after he left--not as executive secretary--but because Newt [Newton] Stearns thought I should have that office. It was next to the governor's office, and he preferred the privacy of the office that I had previously. I went in to see Bob Alderman about something and he was packing; taking pictures off the wall and taking stuff out of his desk drawer.

Somebody had said to me, "You know, I think he's leaving." I said, "Leaving? Why? I can't believe it." So, I had no idea what had happened. This was all, I suppose, talked about behind closed doors. I was almost in tears because we [Alderman and Groves] had such a nice association.

Sharp: Did Governor Knight as governor, instead of lieutenant governor, seem quite different to you overnight?

Groves: No. He didn't change at all as far as I was concerned.

Sharp: He was still the jovial, convivial kind of person.

Groves: Still the same. Oh, definitely, very much so.

Sharp: How did the offices of the governor and the lieutenant governor differ, physically?

Groves: Oh, well, the work load was more tremendous. The demands on his [Knight as governor] time were much more tremendous, plus the fact that when he was in the office, which was a great deal of the time, he had appointments all day long, from the moment he came in the office in the morning, which could be anywhere from nine to ten o'clock. The appointments were set up throughout the whole day for him to see people.

We would have meetings after his last appointment. He would call in the staff. I used to go in because I was considered a staff member with the rest of the men in the office. Then I found that--I don't think the men felt as free to talk [with me there]. I don't know whether they used any profanity or not, but I could just sense that they felt a little better, I think, without me there. So, I stopped going in.

Sharp: Were these the skull practice sessions?

Groves: Yes.

Sharp: We understand that they were pretty meaty conversations and a lot of the issues were settled in those meetings. Was that your feeling too?

Groves: Well, I found that out later. I think that there was. They really raked things over the coals and made a lot of determinations then. Everybody expressed their opinions. But since I attended so few, I couldn't say.

Sharp: Were they every day? Or a couple of times a week?

Groves: He [Governor Knight] managed to try to have skull practice almost every day. I wouldn't say that he did always, because there were many times that he also had to take off from the office and fly somewhere, or something was going on at the Mansion.

Sharp: What were the main issues that had to be solved in setting up the new governor's office?

Groves: I'll tell you, when I first walked in there [the governor's office] nobody instructed me as to what my duties were to be. I was told I was to be personal secretary and, as I say, I was given this office next to Bob Alderman. The girls who were in the office were not sure if they were going to be employed there--they hadn't been told.

Sharp: So, no one was going to tell you what to do.

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Groves: The mail coming to my desk was just piling up and I didn't know whether I was to answer these letters. Some of them, I felt, were not within my jurisdiction to reply to. I used to stay in there every night going through all these piles of mail, reading it. Maybe I'd be there at ten, eleven o'clock at night when everybody else had left.

Sharp: Were you considered to be the head woman in the office as well? Did you now have a staff who worked--

Groves: Well, I was never told directly that I had a staff. There were Maryalice Lemmon and, of course, Wilma Wagner and Nicki. Nicki was brought in there later; she was out in the steno pool, I think. I can't think of her last name. She could tell you about the

Groves: governor because we had designated about two or three girls who were to take his dictation. So, she spent time in his office. Her name was Haggerty, but she married and I don't know her married name. I think she works in the legislature somewhere.

Sharp: Maybe I can find it.

Groves: Yes. She's a very gregarious little gal. I'm sure she could express her feelings about the governor and the work she did.

A New Routine With a Most Jovial Governor

Sharp: Great. Thank you. Did Goodwin Knight have special filing procedures, or anything like that he wanted used?

Groves: No. That was taken care of. We had a filing staff way in the back. We had approximately sixty employees on the staff, as far as I can remember, and there were maybe six to eight girls in the file room.

There was a little flag put on every piece of mail and everything had the governor's initials and then the secretary's to which it [the mail] would go. For instance, mine would be SPG [initials], or SP to begin with. That correspondence, after it was replied to, was automatically to go back to the file room--anything that was flagged--because that's the only method they had of keeping up with any correspondence that somebody might want to refer to.

Sharp: Did you have a feeling that with this office of the sixty employees that, perhaps, they knew quite a bit more about the governor's office than you did?

Groves: I did feel that way when I went in until I finally was appointed private secretary. Then, with the help of Wilma Wagner, I learned what the duties of the previous private secretary had been.

Sharp: That must have been a very tough time for you.

Groves: Oh, it was! I was totally ignorant of what my duties were to be--I had no idea. Then I found that I had a private file in my office for personal letters of the governor's that I took care of personally. Some I might run off on the typewriter, which I didn't do very often. Most of the time they were dictated to Wilma. Letters of condolences, letters of congratulations.

Groves: Also people that the governor knew--they may not have been personal friends, but whether it was personal or a friend that he knew who was going to travel abroad, letters of "To whom it may concern" were written. So, if a person went to Italy, or to France--wherever--they might be given a little extra attention with this letter which was introducing the person, telling them that the governor knew them well and hoped they would be given a little more consideration--so that they could open up just a few doors.

Also, people that the governor knew and had children who were going to go to college and who probably had, you know, grades where they would be accepted and had a particular college that they wanted to go to, I would prepare the letters to that college, giving all the background on the young person.

Sharp: Was much of your day, then, concerned with these more personal kind of letters?

Groves: Yes.

Sharp: So, if you wanted to divide the letters that the governor had to deal with every day, there was a staff that took that kind of letter--you know, the impersonal letters--and did the more impersonal arrangements. But you did the more <u>personal</u> arrangements.

Groves: Yes, right. We had letters come in where, maybe, people wanted to contribute to the governor. Some of these I would take up with the governor after office hours and find out what he wanted to say, or do with them. And I took care of his banking. Until he married Virginia, I took care of any outstanding bills that had to be paid.

We had one from Bullocks Wilshire that had been paid. Oh, they gave us a bad time! Kept insisting upon the governor sending them money for this outstanding bill that had been paid on time. We just had a hassle with them, which is bad when you're a governor to have to hassle with some store as large as Bullocks Wilshire and all the employees they had. You know, it doesn't set too well sometimes.

Sharp: Were you aware of the romance that began between Virginia Carlson [and Goodwin Knight]?

Groves: Yes. They didn't know. [laughter] I was aware of it when he was lieutenant governor because sometimes I would have to work on a Saturday, and she was brought in when there was no one around. I never told <u>him</u> that, but I knew something was brewing.

Sharp: That must have seemed a very happy occurrence to you?

Groves: Yes, it was. I was so happy for him, and I was happy for her because Virginia's a lovely, lovely person.

Sharp: She's wonderful. She's so vivacious.

Groves: Oh, yes.

Sharp: I can't even imagine what they must have been like, together, because she is so vivacious just in her own self. The two of them must have been pretty dynamic.

Groves: They were, they were. You'd go to a $100-a-plate dinner where contributions were to be made when he was running for office again. She would sit and, during the whole time he spoke, she never took her eyes off him. It was like they were made for one another. He just idolized her; just worshipped the ground she walked on.

There couldn't have been anything more romantic happen to a man or a woman. I really envied them for the great relationship they had. It was marvelous. It was almost like something you would see in the movies. [laughter]

Sharp: She is so beautiful.

Groves: Oh, she is, and those gorgeous blue eyes of hers. I haven't seen Virginia in a long while.

Sharp: Well, she looks wonderful.

Groves: I call her Virginia because--it doesn't sound well, but this is what she insisted.

Sharp: I think she invites that.

Groves: Yes, but she insisted I call her that. She'd call me from the Mansion and we'd have long chats about clothes, and about things she was going to wear. She thought that I dressed so well when I was working. Of course, most of my money went into clothes. I wouldn't have had it any other way. She was just absolutely charming.

Sharp: She must have felt you a very crucial aide, then, in the first days because you had been there and seemed to sort of know the ropes.

Groves: Well, she had been involved in politics for many years. Her mother was very active in politics, so some of that had rubbed off on her--quite a bit of it.

As a matter of fact, when we were almost ready to leave the lieutenant governor's office she came in with a girl friend. That's the first time I'd ever seen her, but I didn't assume there was anything going on there. I think at that time he was taking her out occasionally for dinner. Of course, there was a considerable amount of difference in their ages, so he had known her, I think, when she was a small girl. It seemed so strange, then, to suddenly have this thing blossom into such a big romance.

Sharp: They must have been just a wonderful couple.

Groves: Oh, they were!

Sharp: Everybody that I've talked to so far just exclaims over her.

Groves: Oh yes, you couldn't help it. Quite often she would come into the office if, for instance, it was the governor's birthday. We'd all get together and contribute toward a birthday cake and some little gift. We always went back to the steno pool, which was the largest room, except for the governor's office. Virginia would always come down. In her nice way she was so sweet to everybody.

There were many girls who felt, you know, they were cast off way in the back. Some of the girls felt they never saw the governor, so I would make it a point to go to him and ask him if he would mind, you know, going around the office. I said, "I'll go with you. I'd like to introduce you to these girls."

Sharp: And he was pretty good about that?

Groves: Oh yes, very good. He'd go back, and he'd tell them stories and get them to laugh. I think some of them were older women, and they just ate this all up. Why, he could sweep you off your feet, very easily, and he loved to tell stories.

Sharp: I would imagine that there would be so much volume of work that would go through the governor's office that it would almost seem to exist without the governor. To have that personal contact when you were doing all of this work for this unknown person would have really helped hold the office together.

Groves: Right. And then, too, one department was the traveling secretary's office and he had--I don't remember how many girls--but there must have been at least six girls in that office. They took care of

Groves: all of the invitations. Most of that mail came to me in the evening so that I could go over it again. I finally learned how to forge his name--[laughter]

Sharp: That must have speeded up your work a bit!

Groves: Well, that usually came fairly late, you know, in the afternoon. So, I would forge some of his mail.

Sharp: I did some research in the Goodwin Knight gubernatorial papers at Stanford University and they are incredible. I marvel that someone had the good sense to keep all of these papers, because they do show so much about his administration. But I always wondered about all the letters that I found. How could he possibly have signed them all?

Groves: Couldn't.

Sharp: Yes.

Groves: It was impossible. As a matter of fact, we had someone else also in the office that had practiced his signature enough to--[use it]. Marguerite--oh, she was good. I loved her.

Sharp: Marguerite Gallagher?

Groves: Yes, Marguerite Gallagher. She was one of the administrative secretaries to Governor Earl Warren. Oh, she took care of a lot of things; political, and I don't know what all of her duties were, but [she was] just a marvelous person. She was sort of a mother for a lot of the girls around there.

But a lot of this mail came to the governor [Knight] for his personal signature and that we felt was absolutely necessary that it go to him--people who knew him, and he felt he should take care of his letters himself. A lot of it went to Newt Stearns. The mail was distributed to whichever department the subject matter pertained to because there were nine men [who were executive secretaries].

Of course, as private secretary, as I say, I took care of some of the things. But these nine men took care of the mail if it was a departmental matter, if it was a political matter, if it was an executive matter--this was all spread out--invitational, traveling. So, there were people who could handle all of these situations.

Plus the fact that we talked to people who came into the office, people that he couldn't see if the calendar didn't permit him the time, or [if they were] people that he felt would just take time away from him that he could make better use of. They [the people] would come to me.

Groves: We had an old miner who knew Governor Knight in the days of his mining period.* He was an old man--he always came in the office and wanted to see Governor Knight, so Knight got used to it. He knew that he couldn't get to him--it was a rule. If he did the governor would come to my office, just for a few minutes--"Hello, how are you? Good to see you! Where have you been? I haven't seen you in a long time"--and make the man happy with that.

This happened quite frequently. I'd go in when he was free for a minute and just tell him that so-and-so was in the office. Would he just take a minute to come out and shake his hand and say hello, which he did. As I say, he was a great politician and he loved people. It made no difference who they were.

An Independent Governor

Groves: He'd go out on the street where he loved to buy his juices in the afternoon. That's one thing--now we'll go back just a little. When I first went to work for him, he had had, it seems to me it was surgery for an ulcer, but I wouldn't swear to it. I have a feeling it was, because he was drinking sauerkraut juice.

And if you've ever had it [sauerkraut juice] set down in front of you! He did this to me one day: he put the glass right on my desk. He wanted to dictate something to me. He stood up and roamed around the room and dictated. When he got through I said, "Governor, what is that? What is that that stinks? It's terrible!" [He said,] "Don't you talk that way about my sauerkraut juice! That's good for you."

So, he got so that even when he became governor--and we had a public market where they had a fruit juice stand--he'd walk down there by himself. That's one of the things a governor is not supposed to do. He's supposed to have one or two men with him. You never know when somebody's going to approach you--might want to attack you. Might want to start an argument or a fight with you.

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*After Goodwin Knight graduated from high school and before he went to college, he worked in mines in Utah and Nevada.

Groves: But he [Governor Knight] had been so used to going places on his own that he didn't like the idea of having someone with him. He'd walk through Capitol Park at all hours of the night, which is the worst place in the world you could walk after dark. Never had a thing happen to him. [He would] never be concerned about anybody approaching him and doing him any harm. Until, finally, the executive secretary sat on him and said, "Now you just can't do that anymore."

Sharp: Did he want to go out and, say, get a haircut by himself?

Groves: Oh, he'd sneak out. The executive secretary would come in and ask me, "Where's the governor?" I said, "Well, he was in his office."

He [Governor Knight] had a private elevator from the back of his office and he'd sneak out there. People would meet him downtown--see him--you know. They'd come back to the office and say, "Say, we saw the governor down at the fruit juice bar." So then a couple of the secretaries would run down and grab him, and bring him back.

He'd meet people on the way-- He met a woman who was having trouble with the parking meter. She had only one dime--she couldn't get the thing working. So the governor said, "Well, look, let me try it out." She didn't know he was the governor. He worked with it and he couldn't get it to work, so he finally put a note on it. It said, "To Parking Metermaid," or whatever. "This doesn't work. [signed] Governor Knight."

You can imagine when she saw the "Governor Knight--"

Sharp: I bet it worked the next time--.

Groves: Right. Well, this woman read the note after he left and she was so overtaken by the fact that he stopped to help her, that she wrote him a lovely note. It came to me.

And he stopped people. He stopped somebody on the street one day--he stopped anybody to talk to him. He was always saying hello to everybody. Some people didn't know who he was in Sacramento because they wouldn't get a chance to see him.

Sharp: I guess, before television was so readily available that, maybe, his face wasn't that well known.

Groves: Well, he still appeared on television at times--we all did. As a matter of fact, once or twice the whole staff appeared with him.

Sharp: You were on television?

Groves: Yes, with him. They had someone there to interview us and ask us what we did in the governor's office, and how we liked working there.

Sharp: He sounds like he must have been a pretty good boss, all in all.

Groves: Oh, he was the most marvelous boss I ever had. I had one other and that was a man who was secretary of the [California] Highway Commission and I worked for him. I was the only person in the office with him, and we had a very plush office in the [Department of] Public Works building in downtown Los Angeles. He was another man.

Sharp: What was his name?

Groves: George Savage, but he's passed away now.

But Governor Knight was a man that you could talk to. One day he dictated a letter and he liked to spell out a word once in a while if he thought it was a difficult word. I said, "Governor, I think you've misspelled it." "No, I'm pretty sure, Sadie, that's right," [he said]. I said, "I'll come back and let you know." Sure enough--[he was right]. I thought, well, okay.

When he did something like that to me, then I wasn't sure. I was positive when I went in that that was wrong, so I went back when he was free. I said, "You know, Governor, you might have learned a lot of things at Stanford, but you sure didn't learn how to spell."

And he just laughed. You could talk to him like I'm just sitting here talking to you.

Sharp: That's great.

Groves: That really gave me a wonderful, warm feeling.

Sharp: Especially with all the amount of work and tension that certainly was a part of being in the governor's office.

Groves: Right. Everything just fell off of his shoulders like water would off a duck. Everything came to him so easily. I never saw that man angry, never. Now, if he got angry at any time, it was certainly not in my presence or when I was in his office. He was such a happy man.

People and Appointments

Sharp: What took the most time during the day, out of the governor's hours, do you think?

Groves: I think what took the most time was his people coming in, having appointments, legislators particularly. Now they have sessions year round, but then they didn't. They had bills they wanted passed--[and they] talked to the governor. He had friends come in, but it was a purpose, you know; either a political reason, or people who wanted to do things for him. His whole calendar was completely filled for the day.

Sharp: Let's talk briefly about the legislature. The Feather River Project, which was probably the main water issue during his administration, was pretty heavily pushed after March or April of '56. It may have been because of all the bad floods that had happened in northern California, in December 1955 and January 1956. When this was being pushed in the legislature, did most of the appointments then have to do with this kind of legislation, or was he that intimately involved in it?

Groves: That I don't know. You see, that didn't touch me in any way.

Sharp: Okay. I didn't know if it did or not.

Groves: I would offhand say that I don't think that took all of his time. I think he still had to have a range for his appointments. Mary-alice [Lemmon] would set up all of his appointments and check them out with him in the morning to make sure that these people were all people he wanted to see. Sometimes he'd get a little tired and say, "Oh, gosh, do I have to see him now?" because, you know, it was pretty tiring although he loved to talk. There was nothing wrong with his mouth. He enjoyed that [talking] more than anything.

I don't think he liked sitting behind a desk all the time. He'd rather be out, talking to people and giving talks. That was the thing he loved the most. He could talk off-the-cuff so easily--it was no problem.

Sharp: If, for instance, Paul Mason [the legislative secretary] would come in and tell him about something that was happening in the legislature, would he [Knight] then go out and seek out legislators himself, or did they generally come to him?

Groves: No, they generally came to him, as far as I know. I really don't know because--well, I know Paul Mason was the legislative secretary. Of course, he [Mason] was also an attorney--not particularly for

Groves: our office, but it did help if you had any matters where you needed a lawyer. Oh, but Governor Knight had been an attorney too. But those things I had nothing to do with, so I really don't know what went on.

Sharp: Okay. Did you help him prepare for any of these meetings with legislators, or did somebody else do that?

Groves: No. Usually the secretary of the legislator would call Maryalice and she would set up a convenient time for the legislator to come in and see the governor. But we had an open-door policy for legislators so there was always time set up for them even though, maybe, other people couldn't on that particular day. But the legislators always had an open-door policy.

Sharp: Knight also held a Governor's Council meeting every month and Tom Bright, as departmental secretary, had as his job to organize these Governor's Council meetings. Did you help the governor organize any of his materials for these meetings?

Groves: No. Most of that was done by Tom Bright. He [Bright] did the organizing; all the governor did was appear and discuss whatever they were going to discuss for that day.

Sharp: Did Knight have special office habits? What was the first thing he liked to do when he came in in the morning, for instance?

Groves: Well, he wouldn't do it the first thing, but if he had no one coming in he'd like to take off his coat. He always wore suspenders.

Sharp: Did he?

Groves: Yes. He wasn't a great big, tall man and he was a little on the hefty side, and if he knew that he had no appointments for that day and he was really going to buckle down and give something serious thought, he liked to take off his coat.

Then, he might come into my office and find out what was going on, and had I heard from so and so? Did I get that letter out? Is it ready for his signature? Or he'd go into Maryalice's office and find out what was going on there. Or he'd go to any number of the offices and check with the staff.

Sharp: Did you have a regular period in the morning that you went in and helped him organize the day or--

Groves: No, I had nothing to do with that.

Sharp: But you were given a list of the appointments that he was going to have?

Groves: No. I would oftentimes check with Maryalice; she had it on her desk so all the staff members could see it. As a rule the first person, I think, that went in was the executive secretary, to discuss any matters that were pending and what he thought the governor might have to look into, or someone he should see pertaining to a special subject.

Sharp: Now before, you said that Virginia Carlson did come into the office, occasionally. After she became Mrs. Knight, did she come in more often, or did she tend to stay away?

Groves: No. She usually came in if they [Governor and Mrs. Knight] were to take off for somewhere when he was going to give a talk. If he was going to be late, by appointments he had in the office, why then she would come into the office and meet him.

I did belong to the Soroptimist Club for a while and that took up too much of my time. I didn't like competing with all the women, and their clothes and their furs. I don't try to compete with people, and to me, if you're going to have a membership in an organization, I think it's to do things--accomplish something--and not come in there in your best clothes and hat and furs.

Sharp: I wondered about the family coming into the office. Did Carolyn and Marilyn come into the office too?

Groves: On a rare occasion they might come in to see their dad. If they were coming in for a weekend at the [Governor's] Mansion, sometimes Carolyn or Marilyn would come in to have a little visit with their dad, if he had the time. He usually found time for them. He had a little office behind the governor's office--it was a darling room--and he would sit back there.

Sometimes he'd have an appointment and he'd stick one in that back room and one in his own office so that these people wouldn't feel like they were waiting too long for the governor.

Sharp: Many people have commented on the informality of the governor's office when Goodwin Knight was governor, and that that was a great contrast to when Earl Warren was there. Did it seem a particularly informal office, to you?

Groves: Well, I think it was not when you first entered the office. I'm trying to think of the receptionist's name--Mrs. Doty.

Sharp: Madeline Doty?

Groves: Madeline Doty. She was a very proper, dignified lady, but she still was very gracious to people. She could make you feel very comfortable and would visit with people who were waiting for any length of time. I think there was more formality right there, as you entered the office. After that, I don't think there was.

You had this long hall to walk down before you got to the governor's office and if you weren't having an appointment and you knew someone along the way you'd stop and yell, "Hi! so-and-so." Or if the governor was keeping somebody too long--if it was someone that I knew--they would come into my office and visit with me until they could get into the governor's office. That helped also so that people didn't get impatient and irritated.

Of course, on the other hand, we had people whom the governor did not want to see, under any conditions, and who came to me trying to get in--get their foot in the door.

Sharp: How did you handle that?

Groves: Well, I tried very diplomatic--all ways of keeping them and telling them, you know, how busy the governor was. We had one man in particular who felt he was a very good friend of the governor and helped him in his campaigns. His background, so they found out, wasn't most desirable. He was a nice man; I got along fine with him. I liked him; I knew him for a long time. He really got upset and he always came to my office and I had to deal with him, and I found all kinds of excuses to put him off. I would tell him that "the first chance I get I'll go in and I'll ask him [Governor Knight] to please call you." Well, of course, he never got the call, so he'd keep coming back.

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Groves: Quite often at night, particularly if we had a long evening, maybe six o'clock, seven--[Knight would come to see me]. We had carpeting in all the offices, but I also had a little platform over the carpet that my chair sat on so I could spin around on it easier, and he'd like to come back there and have a talk, and then he'd do a soft shoe. He really, I think, missed his calling; he should have been an actor of sorts, you know.

He'd come in and sit down and he'd either tell you how tired he was or [say], "Boy, it's been a long day, Sadie! How has your day been? What's been happening today?" He asked about, even after I

Groves: was married, you know, "How's your husband," and he talked about various and sundry things. Then [he would] maybe go on to tell you a story. Sometimes he'd come in without his jacket on, sometimes with his jacket on.

He was just like a very good, old friend come in to visit you and you could discuss anything you wanted with him. I discussed a lot of things with him that I wouldn't have, probably, with other people.

Sharp: Especially with another kind of boss, perhaps.

Groves: That's right. He'd wander through the office, go into Newt Stearns's office, and then talk to the girls that worked for him or go into Maryalice's office and throw a few quips with her and kid her. Of course, Maryalice is quite a gregarious individual, as you've probably found out.

Sharp: Yes, I found her so.

Groves: And has no fear of speaking up and saying her bit. He got along very well with her.

Sharp: She seems a very gracious woman.

Groves: Plus she had a good background, as you know.

Sharp: Well, she was at Stanford too--

Groves: Right. And Smith College.

Sharp: I'm sure Miss Lemmon and the governor had lots of conversations about Stanford and so on--they had a lot in common.

Groves: Oh, sure, that's right. And then, also, her father was a U.S. circuit court judge and her mother was the daughter of a state controller, so she had quite a lot of background.* Also, she was one girl among three or four boys. They all did well for themselves.

Sharp: Yes. Did you ever go to any of the open houses that were held at the [Governor's] Mansion?

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*See Maryalice Lemmon's interview in this same volume.

Groves: No, I never did, but I used to go to the Mansion quite often.

Sharp: Did you get to do work there?

Groves: No, I went there for parties. I was invited. For instance, a press party would be given and I would be invited. The very first one that was given was before he [Goodwin Knight] was governor, when we first went to Sacramento. The governor had asked me and Newt Stearns. As a matter of fact, I think all the staff members, the men and myself, were invited because we knew, almost everybody in the office knew, all the newsmen. Other parties were given, for personal friends, for the legislature and their wives, you know.

Then Carolyn's wedding was given at the Mansion and I was invited to that.

Sharp: Did you get to go to that?

Groves: Well, they always said that I was a member of their family because I had come with him from Los Angeles. Virginia [Knight] always made sure, she always insisted that I was a member of the family.

Secretary of the Year

Groves: In 1957, someone had given my name to one of the men from Underwood Typewriter Company. They were holding a contest and they were going to choose the outstanding secretary of the year throughout the United States and there were about five thousand contestants throughout the United States. I was chosen as the Secretary of the Year.

Sharp: How wonderful!

Groves: At first I didn't think I wanted to get into something like this, but this man came into the office from Underwood and he sort of induced me into sending a picture [of myself] to the company, and also getting a letter of one hundred words or more from the governor, indicating why I should be chosen National Secretary of the Year. The governor wrote a very beautiful letter and that was one of the winning features.

I had a free trip to New York. I was there eight days, stayed at the Waldorf Astoria [Hotel], and I was interviewed almost every day by someone. I also appeared on tv. It was called "The Night Time"--the night something or other--[program]. That same evening I had tickets given to me for My Fair Lady, with the original cast.

BEST IN NATION—Miss Sadie Perlin of Sacramento, private secretary to Gov. Knight, named national Secretary of Year by an office equipment firm. A 100-word statement from Governor helped her win honors.

Gov. Knight's Secretary Wins National Title

Executive Gives Aide Assist to Honors and New York Trip With Praise for Qualities

SACRAMENTO, June 8 — Gov. Knight has a secretary with a national title and he lent a hand in earning the crown.

His private secretary, Miss Sadie Perlin, formerly of Los Angeles, was notified yesterday that she had won the title of National Secretary of the Year, plus a trip to New York.

As his contribution, Knight sent the sponsoring national equipment firm a 100-word statement saying Miss Perlin had the requisites for a Governor's secretary in "superlative degree."

Enumerates Qualities

What does a Governor's secretary need?

"A rare blend of fine qualities . . . loyalty, integrity and an appreciation of privacy . . . charm and ability to act promptly with discretion . . ." the Governor wrote.

Knight added that Miss Perlin, a tall, attractive brunette in her late 30s, performs many "sensitive executive duties."

No one was more surprised than Miss Perlin when she opened the letter telling her of her new title.

"Oh, I won," she shouted, and secretaries from around the huge office on the first floor of the State Capitol rushed in to offer congratulations.

Visit to New York

She is to leave for New York July 11, and will remain there a week.

Miss Perlin worked for the State Highway Commission in Los Angeles before joining Gov. Knight in 1951 when he was Lieutenant Governor. She transferred to Sacramento when Knight became Governor in 1953.

Sharp: That must have been grand.

Groves: Yes. I was flown on what they used to have that was called the "red carpet flight," the thing that rolled out the red carpet.

To just go back a little, I flew from Sacramento to San Francisco. I was almost the last person off the plane and I noticed a gentleman standing out there with a huge bouquet of red roses and I thought, you know, there must be some dignitary on this plane. I kept watching--who's going to get the red roses? When I got off the plane someone came up to me and said, "Are you Miss Perlin?" And I said, "Yes."

He said, "Well, we'd like to have some pictures of you." This man presented me with this huge bouquet of red roses! They photographed me there and then I got on this flight. Oh, that was really some flight because they just fed you, from the time you left the ground until you landed in New York. I arrived and the vice-president of Underwood, and his wife, and the public relations man met me at the plane, they hired a limousine, and took me to the hotel.

I unpacked and then they took me to dinner at the top of the Waldorf Astoria [Hotel]. From then on it was night after night. I wasn't in until maybe two, three, four o'clock in the morning because, in New York, you're up half the night dining everywhere and just having a marvelous time.

Sharp: Was it hard to go back to work after that? [laughter]

Groves: Yes. It was hard to come down.

In the meantime, Mrs. Knight knew I didn't own a fur at that time. So, since she had a number of furs, she had offered a stole to me, a beautiful silver stole that she had. I said, "Oh, Mrs. Knight, I really don't want to take it. You know, anything could happen to it." She said, "Well, I have it insured." I said, "I know that, but still I don't want to take someone else's things." "No, you have to have it," [Mrs. Knight said].

Well, what happened--the day before, she and the governor had been invited to some affair in Los Angeles and she took the stole with her. She had sent me over to the Mansion to pick up some shoes and some things that she wanted. The pilot had flown back with their plane and he was going to make another trip back to pick them up, and she wanted these things because they were going to be going somewhere else.

Groves: I thought to myself, "Oh, there goes my fur." I had sort of planned my wardrobe out. I had gone out to I. Magnin's and really bought myself out, you know, with clothes that I thought I'd need. So, she called me from Los Angeles and she said, "Sadie, I haven't forgotten that stole. I have it because I'm wearing it tonight, but it will be there tomorrow morning, and you're to have it for your trip." I said, "Oh, Mrs. Knight, don't do that." "Yes, I insist. You're going to have that fur. I promised it to you," [said Mrs. Knight].

It was back the next morning, and I had it for my trip. So wherever, you know, among the group that I was traveling around with in New York I let them all know it was Mrs. Knight's fur. Everybody kept coming up to it, [saying,] "Oh, my goodness! Isn't that beautiful!"

Sharp: It must have been beautiful.

Groves: It was, and it was beautiful on her. So, I really enjoyed it [the trip] and I brought back records, albums of My Fair Lady for Virginia [Knight] and the governor, and for special friends in the office that I worked with.

Sharp: What fun! Do you still have the letter that Governor Knight wrote for you?

Groves: Yes, but I can't find that. [gets up to look for documents]

Sharp: In fact, we always like to include a couple of personal papers within the volume with the interview.

[pause in conversation while Groves searches through papers]

Groves: I know I must have it, somewhere.

They [Underwood Typewriter Company] interviewed one secretary and they asked her what she did for her boss and she said, "I keep him guessing." I thought, I wondered what was going on. [pause]

The senate wrote up a congressional resolution, and so did the assembly, with congratulations to me on this. I've got this concurrent resolution and they referred to me as being "the girl with the halo," or something. One of the girls in the assembly was an artist and so she finished up another resolution and got that framed.

Groves: But there's a third thing; I don't know what it is, but it may not be the letter at all, and that's the one thing I've been trying to save--it's somewhere, but where I don't know--because it was so beautifully written. I'm really proud of that.

Limited Involvement in Campaign and Convention Work, 1954 and 1956

Sharp: Yes, I'm sure.

I wanted to ask you about Governor Knight's campaign and if you had any involvement in it. First of all, were you involved in the 1954 campaign, when he ran for governor the first time, at all?

Groves: Well, only to the extent of helping get the letters out regarding the campaign. But we were not allowed, in the office, to do any campaigning; it had to be done after office hours. State employees are not allowed to do any campaigning. So, I went over to the headquarters and typed letters for him. That was about the extent of what I could do.

I did attend some $100 dinner for him in San Francisco. I used to save most of the whole year to go there.

On occasions his campaign managers were [Clem] Whitaker and [Leone] Baxter, husband and wife. I don't know which one died. I think it was--

Sharp: Clem Whitaker.

Groves: They would come into the office, waiting for the governor to come in, and talk to me about what was going on, but, no, nothing was done there, in the office. Not anything that I had to do with, because I wasn't allowed to do any of it.

Sharp: Were you, then, involved in the 1956 Republican national convention in any way?

Groves: Yes, in San Francisco. That was held at the Cow Palace and we had headquarters for some of the secretaries and myself and some of the staff secretaries. I was out there with a group. Then, also, at the hotel in San Francisco where the governor was they had Madeline Doty as receptionist, and Newt [Newton] Stearns. There may have been a few more; I don't know. Well, letters were being done and I was, you know, trying to see what was being done and trying to help out a little bit.

Groves: I was given an invitation to the big party where the then vice-president, [Richard] Nixon, was, which is no feather in my cap. [laughter] I'm trying to think of who else was there. Oh, [Nelson] Rockefeller and his friend. But the most prominent man for that evening was Vice-President Nixon.

Sharp: There were inquiries, and I don't know if it was any more formal than that, about the possibility of Goodwin Knight running for vice-president.

Groves: Yes, there were.

Sharp: I don't even think it was a bid; I think it was even more informal than that.

Groves: Yes.

Sharp: The fact that he didn't get the nomination--did that have any effect on him at all, after everybody got back to Sacramento and things were sort of business as usual?

Groves: Now, which period are you talking about?

Sharp: Nineteen fifty-six.

Groves: No, not as far as I know. None whatsoever. There may have been something going on that I didn't know was going on, but I wasn't aware of it.

"The Big Switch," 1957-1958

Sharp: Okay. The rest of our time, then, I'd like to devote to the period 1957 through '58, which, of course, is the period of the "Big Switch."

Groves: Right.

Sharp: Early in 1957, William Knowland announced that he would not run for re-election for U.S. Senator and then Knight announced that he would run for re-election in August '57, about. Knowland announced, a month later, that he was going to run for governor [of California]. In November 1957, then, Goodwin Knight and Virginia, and Newt Stearns, and some other people went to Arizona.

Sharp: This is our understanding, anyway. From there, Governor Knight went on to Washington, D.C. He announced that he would not run for re-election, that he would run for U.S. Senator instead. I wonder where you were in all of these months?

Groves: I was in the office, carrying on with my usual duties. As a matter of fact, I can't even recall that I knew that he was in Arizona. Did Maryalice remember that?

Sharp: Yes, she did remember. But I've interviewed so many people now, it's hard to remember who remembered what.

Groves: Yes. It just slipped my mind completely. Maybe at the time I knew, but right now, for the life of me, I can't remember that part of it. I knew he wasn't feeling good during that time and was at the Mansion--he did not come in the office. As a matter of fact, I didn't see him when I left the office at the end. I left December '58--

Sharp: Oh, really?

Groves: --and his term was over in January. I don't know whether he came back or not. I left then. Newt Stearns said, "Well, there's no point in coming back."

You know, everything was over with and the wheels of Washington had really pushed him out. They'd manipulated him, which I thought was very unfair and unjust.

Sharp: When did you learn that Goodwin Knight was not going to run for re-election?

Groves: Well, I learned it in the office--at that time he had not been ill yet--and he found that the wheels of Washington, D.C. between Nixon and Knowland had decided that he was not going to become U.S. Senator, [that] he was not going to run for the governorship again, because that's what Knowland wanted.

Sharp: And what time of year was this? I just want to be sure.

Groves: My memory doesn't serve me very well.

Sharp: Okay. But Governor Knight had announced that he was going to run for re-election, and that was August 1957. Shortly thereafter, Knowland announced that he was going to run for governor. Did you find out that Knight was not going to run for governor, then, shortly after Knowland announced, or--

Groves: Yes. I think it was before because there were discussions in the office about this and word had gotten back that Knowland had decided to run for governor.

Sharp: What went on inside you when you found out that Governor Knight wasn't going to run for re-election?

Groves: In the meantime, I had married in September of 1957. Of course, I [had] thought if he [Governor Knight] decided to go to Washington--whether it was [as] vice-president or U.S. Senator, or whatever he was going to do--I wondered if he was going to ask me to go back with him because I would have gone.

But because I was married, I had decided that it was time, that there was no point--I wasn't going anywhere. My husband certainly wouldn't want to go back to Washington. He might have, but I decided, because I was married, I certainly wouldn't want to go back. My only thought was that if he should, you know, run for governor again, then I would stay on, but not under any other conditions.

Sharp: So, when you found out that he was not going to run for re-election, that pretty much satisfied all the questions that you had?

Groves: Sure. I was unhappy for him because politics was his life, this is what he lived for. You know, his whole working life was politics, that was it. From the time that I can remember anything about him he enjoyed politics so. He lived, ate and slept it, I think, aside from his wife and his family. But that, really, was his mainstay. I felt very, very badly that he couldn't have what he wanted because I felt he deserved more and that he should have gone further.

But, as I say again, the people in Washington decided differently and really ruined things for him.

Sharp: Why do you think he didn't run anyway even though Knowland was running?

Groves: I don't know why he didn't run for U.S. Senator. It seems to me there was some reason there, that they balked him out again, and there was nowhere else to go, as far as I could see.

Then, I remember, at the very end there he took ill. I thought that was when he had hepatitis, but from what I read that was later.

Sharp: It was later. Governor Knight briefly made a bid for re-election in '62, in fact really '61, and didn't really get very far. He became ill with hepatitis and had to withdraw.

Groves: Well, then, he must have had some type of flu because I know he wasn't well at all at that time. As I say, I didn't even get a chance to say good-bye.

I'm a very strange person in some ways. I never felt I could pry into their [the Knights'] personal lives even though Virginia called me and I saw her before I left, and she said, "Please stay in touch. Pack your suitcase and come and visit us for a few days, anytime." But they had so little private life during the time of their marriage that I felt, you know, they deserved to be left alone. Now, some of the staff did go and visit.

You know, I keep my personal life and my working life separated; I always have; I was taught to. I never brought home my friends that I made in the office. My father always felt that I'd have a better relationship with those people because the minute you bring them home and they pry into your personal life then, problems begin and tales are taken back to the office. Maybe it's wrong, I don't know, but that's the way I was. So, I never questioned anyone.

Maybe I should have said--you know, it was a new experience. I'd like to have gone over and said good-bye to the governor, but I didn't.

I know some people have asked me why I don't go to see Virginia. Well, I don't know. Our lives are completely different now. I'm no longer working for the governor, so I guess she's entitled to her friends and I'm entitled to mine. I would like to see her sometime.

Sharp: She looks wonderful.

Groves: I bet she does--from the pictures I've seen of her in the papers.

Consequences

Sharp: She looks great.

What was the impact on the governor's office, then, of Knight's not running for re-election?

Groves: As far as staff was concerned, they were trying to get some type of appointment in some department because they were going to be without jobs, because these were personal people of the governor's.

I wasn't concerned. I was very happy that I did not have to work any more. I would have loved to have stayed on with Governor Knight; I enjoyed politics. But I certainly would not have worked for any other governor.

I think the possibility was that I could have gone to work for Governor [Edmund G., Sr.] Brown, but our politics were different. I had known Governor Brown for many years, as attorney general and in being around the state building. I had worked for the State Personnel Board when I first went to work for the state. So, I'd been around there a long time and got acquainted with him.

He asked me several times--had called from the office--to come over to see him. The last time he called, and I probably would have gone just out of courtesy to him, but my mother had a stroke. So I had to come down to Los Angeles and I never got back. Mickey Haggerty was the one that called and she said, "As a matter of fact, the governor said several times, 'Have you ever called Sadie and told her to come into the office?'"

When he [Edmund G. Brown, Sr.] became governor, before he took over the office, he came in and he said, "I'm very sorry that I can't keep you on as my private secretary, but I have a girl"--of course, that was Adrienne [Sausset]--"who has been with me for fourteen years and I couldn't very well let her go." I said, "Governor, I don't expect you to. It's perfectly all right. You don't have to apologize to me." But he said, "There should be something around here that we could do for you."

And I just let it go at that. So, I never got to see him and I would not have accepted. I can only be loyal to one party and felt it wouldn't be fair to him [Brown], even though he was good friends with Governor Knight. But the rest of the girls who were all in the secretarial group, most of them remained, as far as I know. I think during Reagan's regime a lot of the girls were let go, from what I understand.

Sharp: I think there was a sense that Governor Ronald Reagan wanted to start over.

Groves: Well, he [Reagan] felt, you know, that he would have more loyalty, but I don't think it was so true, except we did have one girl in the office--every time a Democrat came in she changed her politics;

Groves: a Republican came in, she re-registered [laughter], which, to me, is not loyalty. But I don't think she had to work, either. She had a husband who had a full-time job and they lived well. This is the way some people are. She was happy in what she was doing and she was drawing a good salary, and so she wanted to stay on.

I was happy for the girls if they could stay on during the Brown [Sr.] administration--those that did stay on. I think a great many of them did. I think they were asked their party politics, which I don't think is right. But that's the governor's privilege, I guess. Then, I think, a great many of them who could not work--were not permitted to work--for Governor Reagan, found jobs throughout the legislature. Those that didn't took jobs elsewhere, I guess, or went home and stayed.

Maryalice [Lemmon], I guess, she decided to teach. Just what did she teach--fifth grade, or something, up here?

Sharp: I'm not sure.

Groves: She taught for a while although she disliked it very much. That was her major in college. She didn't care for teaching that much so, I think, finally--I understood that her brother wrote a letter to the governor and she got back into the [governor's] office.

The Issue of Favors

Sharp: Well, did we cover everything that you had written down, or did we miss something?

Groves: Yes, I think we've really gone a roundabout on many things. There were times that Mrs. Knight would also call me and tell me what a beautiful letter I wrote--would I write so-and-so for something.

And too, we weren't allowed to receive any expensive gifts in the office. Trivial things were all right. Quite often the governor, and also myself, received tuna from Sunkist in Wilmington and San Pedro, which I sent immediately over to the [Governor's] Mansion. Or melons, or various types of fruit that were sent over. They were immediately taken over by one of the officers to the Mansion.

Sharp: Were they meant to be political types of--?

Groves: No, no, not at all. Just friends who were very fond of the governor, who had known him for many years, and who had voted for him, of course, and had worked for him politically. But it was not a political gift in any way.

As a matter of fact, I had received--oh, several gifts. I had received a very lovely handbag from friends of the governor's. I had written a very nice letter, "To whom it may concern" (they were going to Europe). So they came back from Paris with a lovely handbag for me, [a gift] which I considered for some time because I didn't know whether I should return it or not. I always consulted the governor on these things, or Newt Stearns.

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Groves: [in describing another instance] I also received a watch and I looked at it. I wasn't sure whether it was a good one or not. I think it rather upset me because I was afraid I was taking something I shouldn't have. So, the governor was on his way home and he was ready to get into his private elevator and I ran down that--I said, "Wait a minute, Governor. Hold on! So-and-so gave me this wristwatch. Do you think there is any value--?"

He said, "Does it have any diamonds in it?" I said, "No." He said, "Oh, the cheapskate!" Of course, this was a big joke, you know. So, he looked at it and he said, "Oh, you should certainly keep it. It's a cheap old watch."

Then I had a man who, for some reason, insisted upon giving me a bracelet. It looked like a gold bracelet, to me, and I think he was trying to get his foot in the door of the governor's office. I knew that. He was trying to ply me with all these gifts, and I said, "Look, I cannot take it. Please--"

So, he came into the office one day with this bracelet and I had happened to come down with a cold--I was home. I don't know how he got my address, but he rang the doorbell. I thought it was somebody from the office, so I released the front door and I looked out this peep hole, and here was this man! I said, "How dare you come here! How did you get my address?"

He said somebody in the office had given it to him. He said, "Well, I just had this gift and I want you to have it." I said, "Please, take the gift. I cannot accept it!"

Sharp: This was the second time?

Groves: Yes! So, he couldn't understand at all. He wrote me a letter and couldn't understand why I couldn't accept it. I just ignored him completely and that was the end of the gifts.

The only other thing was we had legislators who would come down. We had some charming men up there who, you know, if you did a little favor for them--like wrote a letter of introduction. Sometimes they'd come directly to me and ask me to try to get [them] in, you know, save a time during the day for the governor. Maybe they couldn't wait for tomorrow and wanted to see him today. They'd bring down boxes of candy and that was about the extent of it.

We had one legislator who always, on weekends, would come home to the vicinity of San Diego and come back weekends and, for all the secretaries on the floor, upstairs in the legislature, he'd have assorted candies in little fancy containers. He'd come down and bring some to me. He was just the sweetest person! They were all really very nice. I enjoyed being with them.

Additional Thoughts about the Legislature

Groves: And I would go into the legislature and listen to what was going on, sometimes, just to get an idea what was happening and see if I couldn't learn a little more. Some people used to kid me after I left the office--"Why don't you run for legislator?"

Sharp: Did you ever think about it?

Groves: [laughter] No. I thought, well, in those days you didn't have any women. They had one woman that was from one of the cow counties up north. She'd been there for a long time. I think, after I left, then more women started coming in.

Sharp: What did you learn when you went to listen to the legislature?

Groves: Oh, the various bills that were presented on the floor. You know, a legislator would propose a certain bill and there would be, you know, how many yeses, and how many noes. And discussions; sometimes they'd become quite heated. Sometimes half the legislature, half the assembly, would be interested in it, and the other half would be reading or sleeping in their chairs, you know. [laughter]

Sharp: Did you try to understand especially the bills that Governor Knight was interested in?

Groves: Oh, yes. They came across my desk. I had bookcovers and all the bills that were passed came to my desk. I had to acknowledge them by signature and put them into these books, so that in any time, if there was any question on any particular bill, I had it ready, handy for him.

Sharp: I didn't ask you very much about the bills because I didn't think that you had too much dealing with them, but are there some that stand out in your memory more than others?

Groves: Well, not right now they don't. If I'd been asked, maybe, ten years ago they might be a lot fresher! [laughter]

Sharp: I'm sure.

Groves: But right now they don't.

Sharp: Okay.

Groves: If it was something that I thought was important, I'd try to read the bills when I found the time.

Sharp: One question that I had asks more for a comment on your part. It's been said by some sources that Governor Knight had sort of a laissez-faire attitude towards the legislature, that he liked to see it go its own way and really didn't try very much to influence what happened in the legislature. Was that your feeling, or not?

Groves: Well, again, I don't know that I can say because, you know, during the legislative sessions, we had the open-door policy and they [legislators] came in and spent time talking to him. So, I never had that feeling at all.

Sharp: Especially with the Feather River Project?

Groves: That's right. That was very important. As I said before, too, the governor didn't like working behind a desk too much. He'd rather be out talking, giving talks, be out moving around. I wouldn't call him a restless individual, but he liked to be going constantly and not just pinned down to one place.

Sharp: And the work with the legislature pinned him down?

Groves: Well, it was the work with a lot of people that pinned him down, you know, the constant appointments--people he had to see, things that had to be discussed, although he enjoyed talking to people. But I never had that feeling with regard to the legislature. But I could be wrong, because I had nothing to say about it.

Sharp: Okay. Is there anything else on your sheet?

Groves: I was trying to see if there's anything--I think most of it I covered.

Sharp: Well, you've covered a lot of ground, that's for sure.

Groves: Whether it's all very important or not, or very interesting, is going to be something else.

Sharp: Well, everything you've said so far has interested me considerably. I think you've remembered a lot.

Groves: Well, as I say, if it were ten years ago I'd have probably remembered a lot more, you know, a lot of the funny incidents that took place in the office, and now I can't.

A Note on the Governor's Mansion

Groves: Another thing I had [written down], as far as the Mansion was concerned, the controller's office, periodically, took inventory over at the Mansion and what the state had purchased. Usually, each governor's wife that would come in would decorate it with the things that she owned but still keep a lot of the furniture that belonged to the state. So, I'd just go over and check with the men that went over to check the rugs and see what numbers were there, whether their stuff was still there, and what condition it was in. So, I would spend a whole day there while they'd be checking all the stuff, and then be sure to let them know what was personal and what belonged to the state. That was fun, because that was a three-story house.

Sharp: I haven't been in there.

Groves: Oh yes, it was--and particularly when Mrs. Knight was in there. Of course, they had just been married and moved into that Mansion with all the beautiful gifts they got, you know, silver and crystal and gorgeous things. She really decorated it very, very nice. And then she loved pink. She did her room in all pink. She had one powder room in this plush, plush pink--almost shocking. And there was a lot of glass in it, and a lot of perfume bottles. It was so feminine. Everybody that came into the Mansion--she made them go in there and look at that.

Sharp: In her own home in Los Angeles there is exactly that kind of powder room.

Groves: Oh, is there?

Sharp: Yes, and it's pink and there are lots of perfume bottles. It's wonderful.

Groves: She's a very feminine woman. It's hard to believe that someone like this exists. You don't run across many people like her.

Sharp: No, no, she's very unique. I understand she re-did the kitchen at the Governor's Mansion. Do you remember that at all? One of the interviewees remarked to me about it.

Groves: Yes, yes, they'd torn out all the old fixtures in there and they put in--it looks almost like a restaurant refrigerator. It was huge. One great big freezer and one great big refrigerator, side by side. They put in a new stove, and that was huge.

They had a janitorial service over there. Most of them were women who worked over there and kept the house in order. And she [Mrs. Knight] had this cook, Ellen--I can't think of Ellen's last name. She's quite an elderly lady now. But she had been a friend of Virginia's family. She came to the capital and she did the cooking. I doubt that Virginia ever did. Of course, I don't know; I never lived there, so I don't know whether she did any kind of cooking or not. But Ellen, I know, did most of the cooking for the huge number of guests, small dinner parties they'd have for her and the governor.

The Mansion being such an old place, they had this breakfast room which was quite large--it had a fireplace in it--and it was more modern looking. She and the governor would eat there most of the time when they were alone.

Sharp: And that was right off the kitchen?

Groves: Yes. Every room in that place is huge, just huge.

Whenever they had dinner parties, or any kind of party, the first thing Virginia would do is have <u>all</u> the ladies gather and go upstairs. I got caught so many times that, finally--she kept calling me when she got to the second floor, "Sadie, come on. You're not coming." I said, "I'll be there, Virginia, I'll be there." And then I'd sneak around the stairs and not go because I got so tired of running up and down these stairs! [laughter]

Groves: Everybody had a tour of the Mansion, though some of the staff wives kind of made fun of it after a while. It got a little monotonous because she'd forget who'd seen it, you know. She meant well.

Sharp: Oh, well, she had so many people to remember so many things for, that it was probably really difficult.

Groves: Right. She really dressed beautifully. I remember--I think it was one of the first gifts the governor bought her; was it Christmas?--a full-length mink coat. It was just beautiful! Then, she had the stole and she had--I think it was a gift from someone, a close friend who had a ranch--an ermine jacket that was absolutely gorgeous!

Sharp: On her that would have been so exquisite.

Groves: Oh, it was beautiful, just beautiful. I used to envy her with all these furs until I finally got mine. Everybody said, "You know, I can't understand it because, for that period, you had a good salary and you could have bought yourself a fur." I said, "Well, I was tempted many times because I kept trying this one on and I kept thinking, oh gee, that's a lot of money to put out, for a fur."

Not until I was married did I get a fur, and that's probably going to last me for a long while. I hardly ever wear it. You know, you're very casual, very casual when you're at the beach. You live in slacks and everything is quite informal, which I like. It's so nice, after so many years of working and dressing up every day, and not having to do it now.

Sharp: Well, I think that's all the questions I have for today. Thank you very much.

Transcriber: Nicole Bouché
Final Typist: Marilyn White

TAPE GUIDE -- Sadie Perlin Groves

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MARYALICE LEMMON
1980

Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library

University of California
Berkeley, California

Governmental History Documentation Project

Goodwin Knight/Edmund Brown, Sr. Era

Maryalice Lemmon

WORKING IN THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE, 1950-1959

An Interview Conducted by
Sarah Sharp
in 1979

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INTERVIEW HISTORY

That portion of the Governmental History Documentation Project concerned primarily with Goodwin J. Knight and Edmund G. Brown, Sr. would be incomplete without recording the reflections of key members of the staff of the governor's office. One such woman is Maryalice Lemmon, who has worked in the governor's office in various secretarial capacities since 1950. In Governor Earl Warren's office she assisted Margaret Bryan in handling phone calls and daily appointments. During Goodwin Knight's and Pat Brown's administrations, she was in charge of scheduling appointments and receiving phone calls for the governors. She left the governor's office during the administration of Ronald Reagan, but returned as an accountant for the office under Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr., the position she now holds.

Miss Lemmon was most enthusiastic about recording her insights on her role in the governor's office and quickly agreed on an interview date late in the afternoon of 31 May 1979. The interview took place in her own separate, small and simply furnished office within the governor's suite of offices in Sacramento. A most attractive woman, Miss Lemmon was dressed smartly in a tailored white blouse and pale-colored slacks.

The interviewer had sent ahead to Miss Lemmon an outline of the questions to be asked as well as some background material on Governor Knight's administration. Since several other staff members from Governor Pat Brown's office had already been interviewed, the Knight-Brown project interviewer was most interested in talking with Miss Lemmon about what it was like working for Governor Knight.

It was clear from the outset of the interview that Miss Lemmon had not only looked over the material sent ahead to her, but she had also taken the time to think carefully about various aspects of her career. She eagerly told the interviewer of her first few anxious days working in Governor Warren's office as a very young woman. Then, she reminisced freely about having to learn the many unwritten procedures which are always part of being a receptionist in a prestigious office. Her frequent contrasts of Earl Warren with Goodwin Knight, and of Goodwin Knight with Pat Brown, tied the fast-paced interview into a coherent set of reflections covering over fifteen years.

Miss Lemmon shared with the interviewer many previously unrecorded anecdotes showing how staff members had to work together to make the governor's office run smoothly. She remembered well Governor Knight's hectic meeting, telephone call and travel schedule, the friendly work atmosphere he created, the sad impact of the "Big Switch" on the office, and other pertinent stories.

Miss Lemmon reviewed the lightly edited transcript of the interview, making only minor revisions and answering a few additional questions. This interview is a fine example of part of what the Knight-Brown project has attempted to do--to reconstruct, with capable, willing interviewees as guides, the unrecorded past of the bureaucratic structure of state government in Sacramento as it unfolded day by day.

Sarah Sharp
Interviewer-Editor

25 March 1980
Regional Oral History Office
486 The Bancroft Library
University of California at Berkeley

I BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

[Interview: May 31, 1979]##

Sharp: The first questions are mostly about names and your childhood. First of all, what is your full name?

Lemmon: Maryalice Lemmon. (Maryalice spelled as one word.)

Sharp: Do you have a middle name that you use?

Lemmon: No, that's the full name.

Sharp: Where were you born?

Lemmon: Sacramento, California.

Sharp: Who are your parents?

Lemmon: My father and mother are both dead. Dal M. Lemmon and May D. (Dunn) Lemmon. My father was a federal judge. He became a U.S. circuit court judge about four years before his death. My mother was a housewife. They met at Stanford University.

Sharp: What was her ethnic background?

Lemmon: Caucasian, as was my father. By the way, her father was state controller of the state prior to her marriage. And, interesting enough, I got to know Alan Cranston (he was a state controller back in Pat [Governor Edmund G., Sr.] Brown's administration) through that connection. My grandfather John Paul Dunn--my mother's name was Dunn [spells out name] D-u-n-n, maiden name--was the last Democratic state controller up to Alan Cranston's time, and he [Dunn] was state controller prior to the turn of the century.

##This symbol indicates that a tape or a segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes see page 41.

Sharp: You've been in Sacramento, state capital history for a long time then?

Lemmon: Well, yes, through that little bit of family connections. And, my other grandfather, Allen Lemmon, was the owner and editor of Santa Rosa's newspaper, which back in those days was Republican--not Democrat as it is today. So it was rather strange that the man who helped defeat my grandfather Dunn, who was behind Huntington and Stanford--that their children were to meet at Stanford University. My grandfather Dunn was in opposition to the right of way and the railroads.

Sharp: Do you have any sisters or brothers?

Lemmon: I have three brothers. Two are attorneys, and one is a doctor of organic chemistry at UC [Berkeley].

Sharp: What are their names?

Lemmon: Two here [Sacramento] are John Vincent--I say John Vincent because the army named him John and the family knows him as Vincent--and the other one is the younger brother, Donald. The brother in Berkeley is Richard, Dr. Richard Lemmon.

Sharp: Are they younger or older than you?

Lemmon: Richard and Vincent are both older, and Donald is fourteen months younger.

Sharp: Did you have any religious preferences in your family when you were growing up?

Lemmon: My mother brought us up as Catholics. My father became one to marry her but never followed it.

Sharp: Did you like school?

Lemmon: Ah, yes. I don't think I was terribly happy in grammar school particularly. I liked high school and I, of course went to the same university. I liked that.

Sharp: You went to Stanford?

Lemmon: Yes. All of us [children] did.

Sharp: What about school did you like best--once you started liking it?!

Lemmon: Well, I don't know. I remember I hated math, can you believe it, and here I'm doing it.* I think association with other people was more interesting and more fun to me. [I was] very shy. Did not like to talk to older people particularly. I liked the playground area, naturally [both laugh], like everybody else.

Sharp: Sure, I did too!

Lemmon: I liked the summers when we were out of school and we could go up to the mountains, generally, up on the American River. I liked to swim and that sort of thing.

Sharp: You must have had a lot of books at home?

Lemmon: Yes. Both parents, by the way, spoke German, so if they didn't want us to know what was going on, they spoke in German instead of English. But they discussed a lot of politics in front of us, and world events, and so on. We got a lot of that. My older brother is six years older than I am so their conversation was tuned to his age group.

Sharp: What did you do after you graduated from Stanford?

Lemmon: I went on to Smith College in Northampton, in Massachusetts, and got my master's degree in, of all things, education. Then I ended up as a secretary in the governor's office [under Earl Warren]. I finally used that [degree], by the way, but that was many years later.

---

*Here Miss Lemmon is referring to her present role as accountant for Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr.,'s office.

II STARTING A CAREER IN THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE: FIRST APPOINTMENT UNDER GOVERNOR EARL WARREN

Sharp: How did you come to the governor's office then?

Lemmon: Well, of course my father was a superior court judge in those days here [in Sacramento], and he happened to run into Helen MacGregor. He mentioned his daughter had finished (finished a secretarial course). I didn't think I wanted to be a teacher. Those were the days you could get teaching jobs.

So I came in on a very rainy day and was interviewed by Helen MacGregor. At the same time, believe it or not, I had an interview with Tom [Thomas A.] McBride in his law office before he ever became a federal judge. The governor's office just called first, and then Tom McBride's office called later. I don't think I would have really cared one way or the other, whether I came here or not.

Sharp: So this was Earl Warren's office--?

Lemmon: Earl Warren's, yes. Helen MacGregor was his private secretary.*

Sharp: And you started working just for Helen MacGregor?

Lemmon: No, I started out in the pool and lasted exactly two days. Then they needed somebody over in research. The third day I worked in the governor's office I started at eight o'clock in the morning and ended up at two o'clock the next morning. The woman who drove me home, who was in that unit and was the principal secretary said, "And I suppose you're going to quit." I'd already had thoughts along that line!

---

*See the MacGregor interview from the Earl Warren Era Series, Helen R. MacGregor, A Career in Public Service with Earl Warren, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1973.

Sharp: I can imagine, after such a long first day!

Lemmon: But that made me angry [chuckles] so I was back in the office, I think, about 10:30 that next morning. She [the principal secretary] didn't come in until about two in the afternoon either.

The gal's name who handled Earl Warren's telephone calls and appointments and so on was Margaret Bryan. Her assistant became pregnant and was hinting that she didn't like meeting the public--that was part of her job--so, I was assigned to that spot [of Margaret Bryan's assistant].

Sharp: So you shifted around within the governor's office after you got there?

Lemmon: Yes. I stayed once I moved up there to handle the appointments, or assist in handling the appointments. I stayed in that role until the end of [Governor] Pat Brown's administration.

Sharp: What year was this, do you remember, that you first came to work--

Lemmon: Yes, I came in April of 1950. I don't remember the date. I think it was the 20th; I'm not positive.

Sharp: So you were there through the last several years when Earl Warren was governor?

Lemmon: Well, I don't recall the exact date, but I was with Earl Warren up at the front of the office, as we call it, for about two, two and a half, years, So I was only roving around the office for about a year, I would say.

Sharp: Did you know Goodwin Knight as lieutenant governor, then?

Lemmon: I met him. He came in once or twice when Earl Warren was out of the state. It was not a friendly atmosphere. Earl Warren and Goodie Knight were not <u>friends</u>. I'm not trying to imply they were enemies at all, but there was no warmth between the two men and there was a tendency to lock up the files, during Warren's absence whenever the lieutenant governor visited the office and this sort of thing. So, with the change of administration it was fortunate for someone like myself that Knight, as lieutenant governor, just had a very small staff and needed holdovers from Warren's staff.

Sharp: I understand Lieutenant Governor Knight had an office and only one or two people worked for him.

Lemmon: Well, I'm trying to think. Sadie [Perlin Groves] worked for him, and Bob [Robert] Alderman worked for him [as executive secretary], and there were one or two others when I was looking over the list that you sent out.* Gee, I just don't recall.

Compared to the governor's office size--it seems to me he had about six or seven people, Sarah, but some of those people were civil service. Also, it was Los Angeles and they didn't want to come to Sacramento.** Naturally, unlike a political campaign there weren't those workers to bring with him. So, Knight practically came without any [employees] to the governor's office after Earl Warren went to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Sharp: Just by himself, almost. What were your early impressions of Goodwin Knight before he became governor?

Lemmon: Well, they're not very deep because I dealt more with, for instance, Sadie. Knight generally brought her along. As I say, it was a functionary thing. He just went by [in Earl Warren's governor's office] and the news reporters all puttered around with cameras and so forth. The only reason he'd come in this office would be to have some sort of ceremonial signing of a bill while Earl Warren was not in California.

Sharp: So Knight was pretty much covered up with press?

Lemmon: That's right.

---

*Sadie Perlin Groves was Goodwin Knight's personal secretary while he was lieutenant governor. She was his private secretary from October 1953 through January 1959 when he was governor.

**While Miss Lemmon was editing her transcript, she noted that as lieutenant governor, Goodwin Knight spent most of his time in Los Angeles.

III WORKING IN THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE UNDER GOODWIN KNIGHT

Changing Over: The Telephone Call

Lemmon: Certainly when Earl Warren accepted [the chief justiceship of the United States Supreme Court], I very definitely remember that telephone call, by the way. It might be interesting for me to talk about it. But, I do remember Knight never came into the office from the time Earl Warren accepted the chief justiceship and left the state of California. Earl Warren was--you have it here someplace--governor of California at midnight, and then he left, I believe, that next morning and Goodwin Knight arrived. Knight was sworn in in Los Angeles--and he arrived up here sometime that afternoon.

In the meantime I'd gotten to know Sadie and had borrowed--I knew you were going to ask me this question--borrowed her telephone lists of people.* The first call that Goodwin Knight asked me to place was to Virginia--gee, I can't remember her married name--

Sharp: Carlson.

Lemmon: Carlson, yes. I dialed it for him and buzzed in and said, "Governor, Mrs. Carlson's on line so-and-so." And after he finished talking to her, he asked, "How did you know about where to reach her?" I said I'd read the newspapers. (I had, and I'd gotten the number out of Sadie, and so on.)

---

*These lists were telephone numbers of people Goodwin Knight frequently called while lieutenant governor. Sadie Perlin Groves had developed them and passed them on to Miss Lemmon.

Lemmon: [I remember] the day that Earl Warren accepted the chief justiceship --of course he was trying for it very hard. He had by that time appointed Helen MacGregor to the Youth Authority, and Verne Scoggins to the Public Utilities Commission.* Margaret Bryan, the gal that I was assisting, had taken Helen MacGregor's place as his private secretary and she was to follow him to Washington, D.C. He kept telling people on the phone--be patient with him, he was dealing with his second string, which made us all feel very good.

But anyhow, he [Governor Warren] was a man who didn't arrive at the office until about ten-thirty [a.m.], normally speaking. So, the telephone rang that particular morning. In those days they said, "Washington, D.C. calling." Now it's just, "long distance," as you know. I asked, "Where from?"--"White House." And who's calling from the White House? So they said, "the president."

I said, "Just a moment, please--" Of course, we had a state extension over to the Governor's Mansion. Buzzed over there and Mrs. [Earl] Warren answered the phone and very impatiently said, "Maryalice, you'll just have to take word. The governor's in the shower." No, she didn't say that, just "Take word," very impatiently. (She was always pleasant to me most of the time so it kind of irritated me.)

I said, "Mrs. Warren, what do you want me to tell the president of the United States?" So she said, "Put that call over here, immediately." I said, "Certainly, thank you," and switched the girl from the switchboard in the White House over there.

I had a mental picture of Earl Warren with the towel draped around him, dripping, answering the phone out in the hallway from his bedroom shower area because he could not have had time--she [Mrs. Warren] could have called in, but he didn't have time to get much on--. Then, shortly after, the announcement was made later that day that he had accepted the chief justiceship.

Sharp: Had he been expecting this particular phone call?

Lemmon: Yes, but, he'd been expecting it for several days.

Sharp: What did that do to the governor's office when you knew he was leaving and <u>immediately</u>, almost?

---

*While editing this transcript Miss Lemmon noted that Verne Scoggins was Governor Warren's press secretary, a very powerful man and close to the governor. See Scoggins's interview from the Earl Warren Era Series, in <u>The Governor and the Public, The Press and the Legislature</u>, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1973.

Lemmon: Before then anybody that was close up there was told to say nothing, of course, but we knew something was in the wind because of the contacts with Washington, D.C. and the telephone calls he was making and the ones he was getting out here from the attorney general [Herbert Brownell, Jr.], and so forth.

Sharp: Did you have any anticipation of working with Lieutenant Governor Knight as--

Lemmon: As of today, Sarah, everybody on the staff is an exempt employee. We have no tenure. We have no civil service rating. Now, there are a few people on the staff that come over here, presently, and can go back, but you serve at the governor's pleasure.

So, no, you just bite your fingernails and hope that you can stay on--maybe because you like the glamour of it. I would say the governor's office stays pretty much in the salary range but perhaps start people a little higher than the other civil service employees. It's tougher out there.

Sharp: When Goodwin Knight became governor was it a matter of actually re-interviewing for a certain job, or did the word just come down--

Lemmon: No. Bob Alderman made many of those decisions and, of course, Sadie helped out, too. I had only met her briefly before that time but she had found me very helpful in giving her all kinds of hints; who was what on the staff, and how it worked out.

Naturally, most--but not all--of the higher echelon on the staff left and were replaced gradually by people Goodwin Knight knew. Newton Stearns became Knight's executive secretary and he'd been held over from the [Earl] Warren administration. By the way, Stearns was assistant press secretary under Scoggins during Warren's administration. He became executive secretary because of the problems with Alderman and the governor [Goodwin Knight]. Alderman's son was hired without the governor's knowledge into a state-exempt position and Knight thereupon relieved Alderman of his position of executive secretary and appointed Newt Stearns to head the staff.

Getting Used to a New Boss

Sharp: Yes, that was unfortunate. I want to ask you, later on in the interview, about the apparent transient nature of the administrative secretaries, like the departmental secretary, and the research secretary. We can talk about that later, unless you'd like to bring it up now.

Lemmon: No, whatever--

Sharp: Okay. The topic fits in better a little bit later, and we can talk about Bob Alderman and John Synon, and some of the other administrative secretaries. Was it difficult getting used to a new boss in this kind of formal setting?

Lemmon: Oh, yes. It's always hard at first. Earl Warren and Goodie Knight, for instance, to take them as a comparison, were such different personalities. You work with them so closely. You're taking notes into them daily, and they're asking you to write a memo to somebody or other, or they're giving you some confidential bit of information to pass on verbally to, maybe, their director of finance--they don't want it on a piece of paper for anybody else to see.

There's not that feeling, of course. As I said, there wasn't a closeness between Earl Warren and Goodie Knight. It took Knight a while to accept you if you were a holdover from the prior administration. Of course, in this case they were both Republicans so there was less of adjustment politically speaking than there was in the next administration.

I recall Pat Brown saying, "Stop talking" to somebody on the phone that I had put through to him, in the first two or three months [of his administration], and I felt terrible about it. I had walked in the room and he was listening. He said, "Stop talking. There's somebody in this room."

You see, I was a holdover from the Republican administration, and I wasn't at all assured that I was going to stay, or be permitted to stay.

Sharp: Your role as someone who has been, almost institutionalized, within the governor's office is very unique because that office is a political situation. The whole interview, I think, will reflect your persisting, your staying on, while the upper levels in the office changed.

Lemmon: I think this you've noticed more than myself. I think that it's a very different climate now.

I happen to be, by the way, the only person that returned to this staff from Jerry [Governor Edmund G., Jr.] Brown's father's [Governor Edmund G. Brown, Sr.] time. No one else came back on the staff, which is interesting. So I'm just pointing out to you, Sarah, this changed. I think in those years it was just different--They weeded some out but there was more of a feeling of professionalism rather than the political angle of it. You knew your job and you were a professional at it.

Lemmon: I guess you heard this one, that, from [Governor Culbert] Olson's to Warren they only kept one person.* Her name was Alice Anderson. Did you ever interview her?

Sharp: No. I've heard of the name.

Lemmon: She became the office manager during [Goodwin] Knight's administration. She lives up near Auburn someplace. She's at the same address that you'll find on the old listing. She'd be worth interviewing.

Sharp: Thank you.

Lemmon: She knew the clemency files. That is the reason she was kept on, and she knew Marguerite Gallagher.** Marguerite Gallagher was brought up from San Francisco with Earl Warren and she recommended that they keep Alice because if not, there wouldn't be anybody left to understand her files.

Sharp: That would be a very difficult problem in terms of the transition from one administration to the next.

Lemmon: Well, you can see it sometimes, can't you? Well, you haven't been in it, but I can see it. In the beginning of an administration, an awful lot more mistakes are made in the first six months than the next three and a half years.

Sharp: It's interesting how many people have commented on the difference in personality and temperament and goals of Earl Warren and Goodwin Knight. Yet, some people have also said that Goodwin Knight really wanted to follow in the footsteps of Earl Warren. I wonder if you saw this at all.

Lemmon: Yes. I think I agree with that statement. Earl Warren was the only three-time holder of the governor's office, and probably will be the only one that ever does. He was a man of impeccable honor, and a man of great political stature in Goodwin Knight's own party, to any light. I think that that's what Goodie really wanted to do.

Sharp: Are there any incidents that point up this feeling, that he wanted to follow in Warren's footsteps?

Lemmon: One would be your alcoholic beverage control situation, that certainly, I sense--you know--that whole story? Earl Warren, of course, had started those reforms. A good example of Goodwin Knight is that he carried it right on through.

---

*Culbert L. Olson was Democratic governor from 1939 to 1943.

**See Marguerite Gallagher's interview, "Administrative Procedures in Earl Warren's Office, 1938-1953," in The Governor and the Public, the Press and the Legislature, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1973.

Lemmon: I think you also see it in some of the directorships. Knight did not replace many of the top directorships. Often, that would be done with people close to you because those [directors] were loyal to Earl Warren.

I was thinking about Frank Durkee as one of the exceptions. Goodie literally fired him, and I don't recall why. I remember helping draft the letter, but I don't recall that.

The man who was in corrections--

Sharp: Heman Stark?

Lemmon: Heman was one of them. No, he's head of the American Institute of Justice, here in Sacramento. I can't think of his name at the moment [Richard A. McGee]. If it comes up, I'll bring it back.

But, he [Knight] kept those people on that were Earl Warren's appointees. I think that points to the fact.

Sharp: In setting up the governor's office for Goodwin Knight, in late 1953, and early 1954, what were the main issues that had to be solved in how to set up a new governor's office?

Lemmon: You're talking about the inner workings of the office itself?

Sharp: Yes.

Lemmon: Well, the fact that he kept most of the staff on. It just ran on. It just changed personalities but not personnel. Sadie moved right in--

Sharp: Continuing as his private secretary?

Lemmon: Yes. She handled his private correspondence, as Helen MacGregor had handled [Earl Warren's]--just a few top people. The rest of us, from the file clerk to the woman that received the mail that came in—There were different priorities, I imagine, in some cases.

For instance, pretty quickly a list grew of people that Goodwin Knight wanted mail delivered personally, unopened, to him from. That replaced the list that we'd had for Warren--

Then I, right away, built up a card file of people he [Knight] was willing to talk to, or anybody who had ever made a contact, in this office, on letters that came through. I kept the card file behind me. It was a huge thing. On it I had signals of who he would talk to readily, who he would want to know who called, and those people who he didn't know. Then, there was always a few who he would absolutely not talk to.

Lemmon: Then, it's like the shifting of sands--times change, and I couldn't always keep up with it, either. For instance, I put somebody on Knight's calendar one time who he was always willing to see. After you've worked with the man for two years you just took it for granted --he never complained about it.

This day he said, "I suppose if you put him on, you can take him off," and explained to me that it was a situation with an appointment the guy wanted, and he [Knight] was in no position to appoint him. So, he just didn't want to see him that particular time and be pressured.

Sharp: Let me back you up a little bit and ask you about these people who had immediate telephone access, or immediate in-office appointment access, to Goodwin Knight. You were given a list?

Lemmon: No. I got, out of Sadie mostly, what and who he had spoken to and was willing to do so. Then you build it by osmosis.

Sharp: Then every day you're--

Lemmon: Yes. Of course, naturally, we didn't have the cabinet grouping at that time. Pat Brown brought that up. But, directors of departments are expected to have immediate access, but I would not necessarily put them directly through to the governor except in an emergency situation.

Sharp: You put them through Tom Bright, for instance?*

Lemmon: No. Normally not. People like that get so they tell you what they want to talk to the governor about. I would put the name on a card and reference to what the subject matter was, if I could get that out of them. Then the governor might ask me to have them talk to Tom Bright or Newt [Newton] Stearns, or somebody like that.**

I had ready accessiblility to Newt, and also to Bob Alderman in the few months he was there. If I had any of those kinds of questions, I took them up with them, too, instead of just taking Tom, Dick and Harry's name into the governor. It was weeded down that way.

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*Tom Bright was Governor Knight's department secretary.

**Newton Stearns held various administrative secretarial positions.

Lemmon: And, Sarah, the first few months of opening of any administration, everybody in California wants to talk to the brand new governor. [laughter]. I could tell you, it's a headache. Sometimes I had four or five pages of names and telephone numbers [for each day].

In those days, by the way, unlike now, the public telephone went into my desk, and I sat right next to his [Knight's] office. So, you were right next to him.

Sharp: I wondered what the typical placement--

Lemmon: The governor's office had to give it up during the [Ronald] Reagan administration. You have people specifically answering the lines from the public, now.

Sharp: What was the kind of person that had immediate access to Governor Knight?

Lemmon: Naturally, large contributers [laughter]-- And, because he was a judge, he knew a lot of judiciary. There were quite a few judges in the Los Angeles area--he had been a superior court judge--that were buddy-buddies of his.

Needless to say, his own family. He had two daughters, I guess you know. Of course, Virginia [Carlson] was to become his wife. He had a sister, Dolly K. Land. All those people had ready access to him.

There were people from insurance companies who were friends of his. There were several people who were presidents of banks. Needless to say, if a head of a union called, he generally got through.

They weren't buddy-buddies, but they were listened to, back in those Republican days. Then, of course, there were those particular legislators that he knew, because he had been lieutenant governor and he sat up in the senate.

Sharp: Was Governor Knight interested in meeting the people who worked in the governor's office?

Lemmon: Yes, very. He used to make the rounds and say, "I'm Goodie Knight." He would go out and shake hands in the file room, and the mail room, and the stenographic pool--we called it. Those (mostly) ladies, never saw the governor before.

Sharp: That must have been quite a difference!

Lemmon: Oh, it was. Once a year there was a Christmas party. That's the only time most of those people saw Earl Warren. I assure you, he didn't know their names. It was kind of embarrassing as far as I was concerned.

Earl Warren, unlike Goodie Knight, was a very cold man. I was Miss Lemmon, period. I didn't even know he knew my name until about a quarter of twelve the night he left. I was still here, tearing up papers--and all the rest of it--and I decided, for the first time in my life, to ask somebody to autograph a photograph. He wrote, "To Maryalice Lemmon," spelling Maryalice one word, and Lemmon correctly. Of course, he knew my father. I was amazed because in three years he'd always referred to me as Miss Lemmon.

Well, within three to four months, Goodwin Knight was calling me Maryalice. And, like today, we call the governor, "the governor" --Governor Knight or, "Yes, Governor"--and so on.

Knight knew not every name on his staff, but he knew a good proportion.

Thoughts on the Office Routine##

Lemmon: At the Senator Hotel one day, Knight noticed the red flag in a parking meter. So, he stuck in five cents, or whatever, and put on the windshield, in his own handwriting, "Compliments of your governor, Goodwin Knight." [laughter]

That gives you an idea of his personality.

Sharp: Great! It's so interesting to interview people who knew Governor Knight. We talk to these people and get this rich mental image of what he was like.

Lemmon: Want one more funny story?

Sharp: Sure.

Lemmon: You're on the phone, saying, "The governor isn't here." You know you're lying, but you know the governor doesn't want to talk to the person. And just to annoy you, or just because he liked to play games--he was a kidder--he'd come out--(he liked to tap dance) and start tap dancing behind you. Anybody who knew him at all would have known that was he. It made your life a little bit difficult sometimes!

Lemmon: One time he came out and--he was a tap dancer, that's all. There were wooden in and out baskets. He broke one of those [pointing to a wooden in-out box on her desk] by flipping his foot over there. It was his own personal, private end of the office and he was just having a good time. So, he broke the box. He said, "Have it repaired," or whatever.

Sharp: If we talk about, what I would call, the issues, it seems to involve at least four sections on how calls and legislative appointments were handled. There were legislative needs, Republican party needs, conflicts within the governor's office, and then, personal matters.

If you could tell me, before we talk about all these needs and how they were answered, how was the governor's day organized, and who organized it? Oh, you did?

Lemmon: [pointing to herself] I did. I am what we called the appointment secretary and I dealt with the invitation's unit, or the travel secretary. The minute the governor would accept an engagement elsewhere, I was immediately notified. Or, maybe, I notified the travel secretary's unit that he had accepted something off the phone from somebody in Los Angeles, or whatever--some engagement at night which, in those days, particularly, would take him out for the afternoon. Maybe I would have had several appointments scheduled. I'd have to get on the phone and cancel them.

Normally I ran the calendar about three weeks ahead of time. On his desk was a typewritten daily calendar of events for about three weeks. After that, it was a brief schedule of night, luncheon or evening engagements elsewhere. So, he could look through those days. He could flip and see at the beginning of the week what he had on his schedule. It might be added to by him, or by me. Normally I, at that point, would have checked it out with him. Unless it was somebody I knew he really wanted to see, I would always get the subject matter and check him with the governor himself.

Sharp: And then try to fit him in?

Lemmon: And try to fit him in.

Knight did not, unlike Pat [Governor Edmund G. Brown, Sr.] Brown, like to have schedules every fifteen minutes. Knight liked to have a half an hour, at least, in between. He didn't like to have everything scrunched together. So we ran it the way he wanted it. It was cleared with him, and it was scheduled so he could see ahead.

Sharp: Did he have pretty long days?

Lemmon: No. Knight was pretty much like Earl Warren. Both of them didn't come in till about ten-thirty a.m. They often didn't leave until about seven-thirty p.m., though.

Then you got to Pat Brown. He got in at eight o'clock a.m, and didn't leave until eight o'clock at night.

Sharp: Generally, what did Governor Knight do all day?

Lemmon: Telephone calls, meetings. All of them, the governors I served, were avid newspaper readers. When they'd get in there would be a stack of newspapers on their desk. If there was no schedule--they'd get on to the news. The press secretary would probably be there with some inquiry from the press.

That was another, by the way, priority. If a press man, particularly the dean of the press core here, in Sacramento, wanted to see the governor, we'd try to squeeze him in. After all, you can't divorce the politician from the statesman.

Telephone calls took an awful lot of time. And meetings. You recognize, in a week's time, Knight probably would be only here three and a half, or four days, because he probably was traveling to San Francisco, Los Angeles, or some other such place--San Diego, whatever, during one of those days.

Knight, of course, spent a great deal of his first year in the Los Angeles area, on weekends, because he had his two daughters, not to mention the girl friend, down there.

Sharp: What took the most time out of the governor's day?

Lemmon: A lot of it was departmental matters. Of course, when the legislature was in session, telephone calls to legislators, trying to twist their arms, or persuade them to vote on a particular measure that the governor was interested in.

Sharp: Let's go ahead and talk about those legislative needs, and telephone calls and appointments that would surround legislative needs. For instance, during Knight's administration labor made very significant gains in unemployment insurance, disability benefits, and so on. Harry Finks was one of the people who was--

Lemmon: Tommy [Thomas] Pitts--

Sharp: --and Tom Pitts, were very much involved in getting Knight to listen to the needs of labor.

Sharp: Apparently, Finks came to see, or talked to, Goodwin Knight often about these needs.

Lemmon: Tom Pitts had far more accessibility. Mr. Finks is not a man I've ever admired a great deal. He's a shover, a pusher. No, he did not have the accessbility to Goodwin Knight that he pretends he did have. That's coming from the person that handled the telephone calls and the appointments.

Sharp: If a certain labor bill was coming up through either the assembly or the senate would, perhaps, Mr. Pitts call and talk to Governor Knight about it?

Lemmon: Yes, or Tom Pitts would ask to see him.

Sharp: Would Mr. Pitts bring people with him to talk, or was it just on a one on one--?

Lemmon: Not unless we permitted it. The question was (always), "Are you coming alone?" or, "Is there anyone else involved?"

No, you couldn't do that [bring other people along], and we'd stop you at the reception desk anyway.

Sharp: Mr. Knight liked to work one on one?

Lemmon: Not necessarily. He allowed, just like any other governor, large meetings, but they were scheduled ahead of time. Never on any spur of the moment, or anything like that. [For] a group of ten, fifteen, there would be the chairs set up, and all the rest of it. I remember all that. But it was structured.

Sharp: There were other very important legislative occurrences during Knight's administration. The Feather River Project was one of them. Is there a telephone history, or a meeting history of this project?

Lemmon: Not necessarily. When it came to that sort of thing, the shove, the push, the working on the bills and so on, were done by members of the governor's legislative staff--Paul Mason, and so on.* Whenever

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*Mr. Mason was Governor Knight's legislative secretary. Miss Lemmon added, while she was editing her manuscript, that Mr. Mason had three secretaries who worked with him. One of these secretaries was Ben Smith. Miss Lemmon also added that the governor's office had temporary help from the Department of Finance during the legislative sessions. She said they came and went from one season to the next.

Lemmon: it got to a certain point where the governor was necessary then Paul, of course, and his assistants would get to the governor, ask to see him immediately. If Knight was in a meeting, what we'd do was take a member of the staff back to the study. I had a key to that. Then, take a note through to him. Interrupt him and whoever he was meeting with--three or four people or fifteen, as I said, or just one person. And the note would say that Paul Mason urgently needed to see you [Knight]. He's in the study.

Then the message was, "If you don't get on the horn--," or go upstairs. And Goodie Knight, sometimes, would just run upstairs, or in the elevators, and pound on doors.

Sharp: Pound on whose doors?

Lemmon: Legislators'. Or they'd be asked to step off the floor and come to the governor. He was a very relaxed kind of a man, as I've already described. It didn't seem to bother him to go up and see the legislators. Other governors would think that would be lacking dignity.

Then also, he made lots of telephone calls. I can remember he'd talk to fifteen legislators in about fifteen minutes.

Sharp: It's been said by some people that Knight had sort of a laissez-faire attitude towards the legislature. What do you think?

Lemmon: I think he did, too. Yes.

Sharp: Why?

Lemmon: Why? I can't answer that. I don't really know.

Sharp: But--

Lemmon: Yes, I think he did.

Sharp: Did he have the same laissez-faire--

Lemmon: Maybe because of his experience in the senate, before, as lieutenant governor. I just don't know.

Sharp: Oh. Did he have the same sort of laissez-faire attitude towards the departments?

Lemmon: Yes. He was a man that jumped into the fray when it really got hot. The rest of the time he let things work themselves out.

Sharp: He let Paul Mason work through the network of the legislature--

Lemmon: Yes. He hired Paul, and he trusted Paul. That was true of other members of the staff, and it was true of his departments. There were a few rare occasions when something did go wrong. Then he had to jump into it. Then he lost faith with that particular person, legislator, or whatever. Because he trusted you to do your job. When it got out of hand--

Sharp: That was your fault?

Lemmon: Yes. You were being paid to do it. And you were being paid, also, to keep him [Governor Knight] out of trouble, too--run your department so that it didn't bring problems on to the administration.

Sharp: How were lobbyists handled?

Lemmon: Pretty much the same way. You have to see some of them.

Sharp: Was there a hierarchy of lobbyists who were more readily seen, or talked to than others?

Lemmon: Yes. I'd rather not bring names in, and so on--if you don't mind--particularly.* But, yes. Once again it goes back to the people he knew in his prior life. It's a political deal, too, unlike today. They had influence with the governor, and lobbyists had influence with the legislature. Certain ones got in, and the ones that were not so significant didn't. The names you know, and saw in the newspaper were the ones that got in here, just like the governor and his people.

Sharp: You mentioned that during certain parts of the year, when the legislature was in session, that it took priority. Did the same thing happen with Republican party matters when it was an election year?

Lemmon: He did slow down when it was an election-year. Of course, it came out.

Sharp: For instance, with the first campaign--it was 1954--was it clear from January of 1954 through November that it was an election year?

Lemmon: Oh yes. The whole feeling on the staff, and the context of the governor. And of course, he was gone an awful lot and he traveled a lot.

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*Miss Lemmon included additional information regarding this statement, which she wished sealed until 1 March 2005.

Lemmon: I had no connection with that campaign. You're going to ask me that question. I stayed right here, answered the telephones. As I recall, it was a very dull summer. Goodwin Knight played it very cool and very well. No one off of the staff worked in the campaign, or went any place, campaign-wise. That didn't stop you from going over to the headquarters on your day off or evenings, but no political work [was] done in this office.

Sharp: Tom [Thomas] Caldecott was state chairman of the Republican state central committee at that point, and Howard Ahmanson was vice-chairman. Were they people that called fairly often during this year, and were attempting to garner support for the governor?

Lemmon: Yes. They had, also, contact with him on appointments--you realize that, too--to boards, commissions, and the bench.

By the way, I guess other people have told you this, Sarah, the local political figure--the party supporter, and particularly the Knight supporter--was always contacted in the county for [an] appointment. The governor's office staff handling appointments to the Bonds Commission and Bench Appointments Unit didn't, necessarily, always follow the advice but, to keep the good feeling going, that person was contacted about board appointment, judgeship, or whatever.

Sharp: Doug [Douglas] Barrett worked on appointments, I know.*

Lemmon: Yes, he did.

Sharp: It seemed that working on appointments was, almost, sort of a group effort. There were suggestions that came from all fields, from different members in the appointments unit and Governor Knight mulled them over, then.

Lemmon: However, the contact was made with the area, too, by Doug [Barrett] or whomever in that unit.

For instance, if it was a judicial appointment they would generally contact--I'm sure Doug told you this--other judges in that area to see how well this individual might work with the other two judges or, if he had any drinking habits, or personal problems that might mitigate against the appointment.

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*Mr. Barrett held several administrative secretary positions in Governor Knight's office.

Contrasting Earl Warren, Goodwin Knight and Pat Brown

Sharp: Was there a network of personal friends that Governor Knight talked to about party and legislative matters?

Lemmon: Not as much as [Governor Edmund G. Brown, Sr.] Pat Brown, for instance. I don't recall any. Knight was more oriented to family. He wasn't as much of the buddy person that both Earl Warren and Pat Brown were.

Knight was not the kind of a person that was happy at the Bohemian Grove. Both Earl Warren and Pat Brown just loved it.

Sharp: What is the Bohemian Grove?

Lemmon: It's a summer encampment of wealthy people. The Bohemian Club in San Francisco--? It's an outgrowth of that, and it's in the redwood country. It's this kind of treatment (hand up in air, holding tray --gesturing as a butler] on weekends. It's a summertime deal. It was interesting that Earl Warren and Pat Brown, in the years that Brown was governor, would arrange the time to be there together. Not to mention duck hunting during the year.

Yet, Goodie Knight just wasn't happy in that picture. And yet, he was probably the millionaire. He was the millionaire. He lost, you know, a couple of fortunes and still passed away a very wealthy man. Earl Warren and, Pat Brown--[who] of course is an extremely wealthy man now,--they didn't have it [then]. But Goodie Knight did. And yet, they were very , very happy in that environment and he [Knight] wasn't.

So, as I was saying, the buddy-buddy was not Goodie Knight-- but Earl Warren and Edmund Brown, Sr. liked to join in and be buddy with the elite in our society.

Sharp: And yet, he was a very affable, cheerful person.

Lemmon: Yes. He was the kind of person that loved to run around saying, "I'm Goodwin Knight," and hope that you'd know that he was governor. He liked the little man on the street and wanted to help him.

One of your articles was reminding me. Every first Sunday, I think, in January, every year he was over there at the Mansion, they [Governor and Mrs. Virginia Knight] stood all day, on their feet, shaking hands with people who were guided through on the tour-- on the lower floor, only--. He'd come in the next day and his hand would be broken open, with sores. Grasping hands all day it got so dry that his hands broke open and he had sore hands for some time.

Sharp: That open house was instituted with the Knights, wasn't it?

Lemmon: It was started, and ended, with the Knights. Pat Brown never had a public reception--the Mansion was his home and he just didn't. They entertained the legislature as the Knights did, too, at dinners and luncheons in the Mansion.

Additional Details on the Office

Sharp: I see. Let's move on now and talk briefly then about conflicts within the governor's office and how they might have been handled in meetings, and phone calls and appointments.

It seems there was a really rapid turnover of the administrative secretarial positions within the governor's office.

Lemmon: Yes. Part of that was a desire to go someplace else, though. These were appointments. In other words, if I serve you, governor--and this is still true to this day--for a year, or a year and a half, or until after the election in Goodwin Knight's case, these people had plans of doing something else or getting an appointment elsewhere, particularly those that were holdovers from the Earl Warren period. They didn't want to stay on. There were obviously agreements that they would--[stay through] the transition.

Sharp: And that was accepted by Governor Knight?

Lemmon: Yes. He was that kind of a fellow anyway. I think he was grateful to have that expertise there for him to begin with.

Someone like Newton Stearns became so close to him in a short space of time, and then came the Bob Alderman problem*--Newt just stepped into the executive secretary spot.

Sharp: Was much of the day devoted to settling questions or conflicts among the secretaries within the office?

Lemmon: You mean from the governor's standpoint?

Sharp: Yes.

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*See p. 9.

Lemmon: It was hardly ever brought to his attention. It was settled out, normally, by the executive secretary, if it got up that far. If Newt Stearns felt it had to go to the governor, it was taken that way, as the strong man on the staff, and the person who has really lasted the longest--he was there to the end with Knight.

[Clem] Whitaker and [Leone] Baxter in the [Governor's] Mansion, with [Governor] Knight and Newton Stearns, made the decision that Knight would not run for the governorship. I'm assuming you've heard that story before, but, I was there.

Sharp: Well, I'd like to hear your version of it.

Lemmon: But, anyhow, there's always power plays on any political staff, or any [staff]. When you have the governor and the power that exists in that office, there are bound to be people playing their games to either be close to him and get what they want, or get something for someone else that they want.

There are conflicts within the staff members which perhaps should be called power plays. Normally, the governor just didn't get involved in them. It stopped at the executive secretary's spot.

Sharp: Did the secretaries and the staff persons like yourself know what was expected of you in the governor's office?

Lemmon: Of course, I had learned my job in [Earl] Warren's administration, through Margaret Bryan. So, I was just staying on and doing the same thing. If anybody new was brought on they were trained into the job.

Because I wished it, I just had a person who didn't sit in the room--it was too small anyway--that took over while I went to lunch. I took vacations when the governor was gone, this sort of thing. The person, I would just call and she would come up from down the hallway. It was all written out there, who was seeing him [Governor Knight], what telephone calls he knew about, what outgoing calls had been placed, and what the next appointment was.

Sharp: Was he reasonable in what work he asked you to do?

Lemmon: Extremely so. Goodwin Knight was a very pleasant, easy man to work for. He really was a darling, sweet guy. He never lost his temper. I can't remember ever a cross word from him.

Sharp: Really! That's a great boss.

Lemmon: Yes. The crossest he ever got with me was [when he said], "Well, you put him on the calendar, now take him off," and he explained to me why.

Sharp: That sounds pretty mild.

Lemmon: Yes. He was very sweet.

Sharp: What was the relationship between you and the major secretarial staff members like Tom Bright and Bob Alderman?

Lemmon: Well, because I sat there and handled all the governor's calls and his appointments, and so on, they once in a while would say, "Who do you think you are?" But they took my telephone calls readily and they answered my questions. I would say that I had excellent service.

That was true of all the department directors, too. It was embarrassing sometimes because I'd call and the secretaries would hear my voice and put on the director before I could say, "Just a moment. It's me, not the governor calling this time." Of course, you expect to be on the phone with the director before you put the governor on.

That reminds me--can I retrogress for a moment? The only problem I ever really had was with Tom [Thomas E.] Dewey and Earl Warren, and who was to get on the phone first. I finally asked Tom Dewey's secretary that if he called, he [Dewey] got on first. If Earl Warren called, he [Warren] got on first. Because, both men were very annoyed if the other person was on before they got on.

Goodie Knight could have cared less. However, as the governor of California, you just automatically did that for him. But one night, for instance, he just decided to answer the phone in the governor's office. I was there and [there] was a kookie character calling and couldn't believe that he was talking to the governor of California. Knight finally had to turn it back to me. [He] just couldn't take it any longer. But, that's the way he was. You'd phone over to the [Governor's] Mansion and you're just as likely as not to get him answering the phone instead of one of the guards.

As a matter of fact, one time I called the Mansion for Pat Brown in New York and got [Nelson] Rockefeller on the line. I couldn't believe it. It was a voice I recognized from radio [and] television. I said, "This has got to be Governor Rockefeller."

He said, "Yes. Sure." We had a chummy visit about him and Happy [Rockefeller]. It was shortly after they had had the fire in the mansion and they had crawled out the window. We discussed that and finally he asked who was calling. "Oh," I said, "I forgot to tell you. It's Governor [Pat] Brown from California calling. Just a moment. I'll get him on the line."

But, he [Rockefeller] was so friendly and charming.

Sharp: You don't expect that accessbility at all.

Lemmon: Not at that level.

Sharp: Did you ever sit in on any of the skull practice sessions?

Lemmon: No. I was not included.

Sharp: Were those taped?

Lemmon: No.

Sharp: So, no one took notes? Or, the people involved just took notes?

Lemmon: The people involved just took notes. I haven't the faintest idea whatever happened to them. I saw some of them, of course, in this area.

Sharp: Saw the notes?

Lemmon: I saw a few. But, they weren't structured notes. In other words, it wasn't like minutes of a meeting. [knock on door] Come in. [no response] Maybe somebody's being funny! [door opens] Excuse me a moment.

Sharp: Sure.

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Sharp: Others have described these skull practice sessions as very important.

Lemmon: I'm sure they were.

Sharp: People brought the issues that had been troubling them that particular day and, the conflicts were worked out. Policy was often made just sitting right there. It was remarked by one of the gentlemen that these skull practice sessions tended to dwindle down, and end, after Governor Knight remarried.

Lemmon: I don't recall, Sarah. I just don't recall that particularly. I can remember that, in the very beginning, [Robert] Alderman was the one who instituted them, too. I think that that could have helped bring the sessions to an end. Alderman's resignation is one of the things, beside Virginia's entering the picture.

Naturally, during the work week until he [Knight] remarried, he had more time to spend. Then after, and particularly the first year they were married, he wanted to go home, needless to say, to be with Virginia.

Sharp: Did he work more in the office then? Did he work on weekends?

Lemmon: Not very often, no.

Sharp: Not even during this period that he was [alone] did he--

Lemmon: No, not very much. Once in a while there might be a speech or something or other that he worked on.

Sharp: But generally he was away?

Lemmon: Yes.

The 1956 Republican National Convention

Sharp: Were you involved in the 1956 Republican National Convention at all?

Lemmon: I was in San Francisco where [President Dwight] Eisenhower was nominated [for reelection]. I was supposed to be handling the switchboard and all his appointments, of course, telephone calls and so on. But I was not a switchboard operator so they had to hire one. The telephone company brought one in and I sat and told her where everybody was, and who was what, so that she could transfer calls and such, and so forth. It took a week of training to do this because--

Sharp: She didn't know anyone--

Lemmon: Yes, that's right. Political figures as well as members of the governor's staff, et cetera.

I got in to the convention a couple of days and enjoyed that.

Sharp: Were you aware of Governor Knight's vice-presidential--I don't want to say a bid because I'm not even sure it was as strong as a bid but--inclination and desire?

Lemmon: Yes, I was. You couldn't be that close and see him day after day without-- And, I think it's just automatic that [if] you become governor of California-- Have you ever known one of them that wasn't interested in furthering their career in the direction of Washington, D.C.?

Sharp: I don't think so. Did he seem to have a real chance, from what you could see around you and what you were listening to?

Lemmon: I find that's a very difficult question to answer. He was a terribly popular man in California and, of course, word spreads. He was just a lovable person. As far as popularity was concerned, certainly that-- But I just don't think that the political hierarchy of the Republican party took him seriously.

Sharp: You mean in California, or in the nation?

Lemmon: In the national end of it.

Sharp: Why not?

Lemmon: I don't know. That was the feeling I personally had. It's just like saying whether Jerry [Edmund G. Brown, Jr.] Brown would. You can hear it talked about and certain members of that staff felt that he had a good chance. But, when you handle his telephone calls and so forth--

The telphone calls tell you an awful lot. That's why I'm saying to you that he [Knight] didn't have the telephone calls and connections and closeness with the national committee.

The "Big Switch"

Sharp: I see. The last part of the interview I'd like to devote to the "Big Switch" and talking about it.

Early in 1957 William Knowland said that he would not seek re-election to the U.S. Senatorial seat.

Lemmon: [in recalling the period late in 1957] Knight, I remember, couldn't turn his neck and look at the clock on the wall in the office here [gestures to wall]. I don't recall what it was, whether it was flu that he had--or what. He was really not a man who was feeling good at all.

The telephone calls started to come in from Clint Mosher, [of the] San Francisco Examiner, who was the intermediary between the vice-president's [Richard Nixon] office in Washington, D.C. and the governor's office in California. Several times I had to say to Clint that the governor could not take his call. He made it very clear I had best get the information to the governor that he had a message from the vice-president.

Lemmon: Unless it was done at a time I was not on duty, I don't believe that Richard Nixon personally called and talked to Goodwin Knight, because it was a constant, day after day, sometimes two or three calls from Clint Mosher.

The last three or four days I recall before the announcement [that Governor Knight would not run again], I spent most of my working day over at the Mansion working in the little office Virginia [Knight] and I had set up, and answering telephones. Then I'd buzz him downstairs and I never got anyplace. So I had to trip up and down the stairs with little notes. I had a typewriter and so forth.

It was Clem Whitaker, Leone Baxter and Newt Stearns in those constant meetings. When the final telephone call came in from Clint Mosher I was not privy to what was said. I heard enough to know that Mr. Nixon had threatened to withdraw any kind of financial support for Knight's re-bid for the governorship unless he switched positions with Knowland. It was one of those power plays. Obviously Knowland was getting the same kind of threats, if you want to call it, or whatever.

So, the switcheroo was made. Leone was the spokeswoman more than Clem. She helped persuade Knight to--

Sharp: --to run for Senator?

I'm not exactly sure when you mean all of this occurred.

Lemmon: Within the week of the announcement.

Sharp: That Knowland was not going to run for re-election as U.S. Senator, do you mean, or--?

Lemmon: No. They were made, if I recall, almost together, weren't they?

Sharp: Not really. Knowland said he wasn't going to run for re-election in January, 1957. He then announced in October of '57, many months later, that he was going to run--[for governor of California].

Lemmon: No, I'm referring to Knight. Knight dictated something to me to that effect, by the way. I don't even remember who it was to. Then he [Knight] and she [Mrs. Knight] drove off in their limousine to fly to Arizona. That was to help him recover. He was a very dejected person as he said goodbye to me that night.

And didn't they announce it just at that time, if I recall correctly?

Sharp: He actually announced the decision not to run for reelection as governor after he came back from Arizona.

Lemmon: The decision was made prior to his trip to Arizona and that was to recover from his [illness], and also to get away from it all.

Sharp: After Knight went to Arizona he then went to Washington, D.C. and met with Vice-President Nixon and President Eisenhower. Then he came back to California. By the time he got back to California he had announced that he would not--

Lemmon: He announced it at that time, but he had made that decision prior to going to Arizona.

Sharp: Was there any one person, and maybe you mean Leone Baxter when you were saying this, who really helped him to decide to withdraw?

Lemmon: Well, Virginia, by the way, was in all those meetings too. I'm leaving her out. I would think she'd have a better picture. Of course, Newt Stearns would have had the best. But he's dead. She might have a different slant. I just remember Leone being, really, the spokeswoman and did an awful lot of the talking of the options, and the reasons why, and so forth, and what she thought was best.

They [Clem Whitaker and Leone Baxter] just could not picture that, if they had no money, that he could be reelected.

You look back on it now and, he [Knight] should have tried it [a reelection campaign] on his own. Pat Brown would not have stepped into the race, he [Brown] said that many times himself, if Knight had stayed in.

Sharp: Because he was so sure that Knight would have won?

Lemmon: Well, he [Brown] knew the popularity of the man. That was an extremely popular man.

Sharp: I've done quite a bit of research in the Knight papers at Stanford. He was a popular man.

Lemmon: Very!

Sharp: That's what the record shows.

Lemmon: He was a very intelligent man, graduate of Stanford and all the rest of it. But Knight let other people do the work in his administration, really, where Pat Brown did a lot of his own work.

He [Knight] had a wonderful ability to pick the right people, too.

Sharp: Your remark about his letting other people do the work, did a campaign in which there seemed to be some really heavy competition, did that seem to be too much for him?

Lemmon: No.

Sharp: But it was the money?

Lemmon: It was the money. Knight was the kind of a guy that could get on a bus and campaign all day, in those days, from one bus stop to the next. He'd be asleep between stops [simulates a snore] konking away, and <u>really snoring</u>. I wasn't there, personally, to see that but I'd heard it from people traveling with him. He could <u>really</u> relax. So, it wasn't that. Life didn't bother him.

Other people persuaded him that he hadn't a chance because of the money. I mean, you're talking about billboards, radio, headquarters. All those things cost money. He just, I guess, was persuaded that he would not be reelected.

Sharp: Before Knowland announced that he was not going to run for reelection, in early '57, was there any indication from phone calls or appointments that Governor Knight had, that there was going to be a problem in his running for reelection?

Lemmon: I never saw it until about Christmastime, or shortly thereafter.

Sharp: Nineteen fifty-seven?

Lemmon: Yes. I began to have very strange vibes in early '57. And then, his [Knight's] not feeling good played a big role in it. He didn't have the will to fight because he, physically, did not feel good. Whatever this illness was he was down.

Sharp: Was his health really in danger?

Lemmon: No. He came to the office most of the time, up until those last few days when he went off to Arizona. But, he just didn't look good, and he didn't feel good.

He suffered, I guess you know, from ulcers.

Sharp: I didn't know that.

Lemmon: He took some horrible cabbage juice. I remember I smelled it on his desk one day and just about fainted. He and Pat [C.P.] Martin took it together.* They both had ulcer problems.

---

*C.P. Martin was Governor Knight's research secretary.

Sharp: That would probably complicate any illness that he had anyway.

Lemmon: Outside of that I don't think that Goodie Knight had much in the way of illnesses.

Impact of the "Big Switch" on the Governor's Office

Sharp: What was the impact of all of this turmoil, once it came out, on the people in the governor's office like yourself?

Lemmon: All I can say--none of us were very happy. We admired and loved the man. You couldn't help but work for him and love him. Everybody on the staff had met and talked to Knight. Just very, very much of a sadness. People began looking for jobs elsewhere.

I didn't, with the hopes of staying on. I had never met Pat Brown, believe it or not, but I was over at Biddels' restaurant where all the political luminaries around here would go out to lunch. In came Fred [Frederick G.] Dutton and the governor-elect, Pat Brown. He [Brown] knew Sadie [Perlin Groves]. She had been the secretary on the Horse Racing Commission. Naturally--she's a very attractive person--and he [Brown] came over-- He always had an eye for pretty ladies--and she introduced him to me. He, with Dutton trying to pull him away, said, "Don't worry. We'll take care of you."

Well, of course, Dutton was to handle the staff but it gave me some assurance. It did turn out to be that way.

IV TRANSITION BETWEEN GOVERNOR GOODWIN KNIGHT AND GOVERNOR PAT BROWN

Sharp: How did the transition between Governor Knight's office and Governor Brown's office differ between that of Governor Warren's and Governor Knight's office?

Lemmon: The attorney general has a larger staff so there was more of a change over of personnel. And, Brown had his own top men, for instance. Fred Dutton, et cetera. The whole top echelon left as Knight departed which was much more dramatic than the Warren-Knight change. Newton Stearns had left [to go with] Whitaker and Baxter, and so on. [All this gave] me a whole bunch of new bosses.

You had this very relaxed, kind of slow, jovial, pleasurable person [Goodwin Knight] and in comes Pat Brown who is a dynamo of activity, and his emotions run from hot to cold.

Then, those hectic days just start all over again and you don't have time, really, to think about it. The turmoil was there. There were more new people. It was a more scary time for me because of the difference in personality. Brown wasn't as easy to get to know as Knight was.

But, having no idea whether I was going to handle appointments, or not, I had the calendar in my desk and just started to fill it up for him. I had met Adrienne Sausset*. Of course, with the fact that Knight did not run against Pat Brown, there wasn't the [partisan] feeling. So, she was welcome to come up here. Again, Pat Brown did come in, I think once, as governor-elect, and [so] there was the outgoing governor, and the incoming governor [here]. There wasn't that animosity because one hadn't defeated the other. It was more of a friendship.

---

*Ms. Sausset was Governor Pat Brown's private secretary.

Lemmon: Adrienne came on and Sadie [Perlin Groves] introduced me to her. She [Adrienne] sat down and started to ask me questions about people on the staff, what they did, what I did and how I handled it. She again told me, later on, that she helped persuade Fred Dutton and the governor [Brown] to keep me because of my willingness to cooperate, and my helpfulness.

Sharp: Did you continue, then, in exactly the same job from Governor Knight's office into Governor Brown's office?

Lemmon: Yes. Then I happened to have an emergency operation thirty days later. I didn't know [Governor Brown's staff] very well, and so forth. There was some girl from the Department of Finance who wanted that job, so they brought her over. She lasted exactly one day--didn't hear from her again.

Then they hired a gal that was thinking about retiring, by the name of Helen Amick. She might be a good one for you to talk to. She lives in Sacramento. Her husband's name is Spence. She was Mrs. Brown' administrative assistant from then on.

She and I became very, very good friends. She helped Mrs. Brown set up all the party functions. They [Governor and Mrs. Brown] entertained quite a bit. Helen and I were such good friends that I became the second, or third hostess over there [at the Governor's Mansion]. I used to spend all day here and then go over and hostess over there at night.

You used to have great dinners. There were steak dinners catered in from the best restaurants. And then, Pat Brown used to move to a summer residence in Los Angeles and we did the same thing down there for six weeks each year. Chasen's and so forth, would cater. So, it wasn't too bad to take.

Sharp: No, that sounds pretty good! [laughter]

Lemmon: One incident happened the day that Pat Brown was sworn in as governor, the gala and so forth. It was raining cats and dogs! Goodie Knight came and kissed me goodbye and whispered to me that I would never be happy with those terrible Democrats. And, just look at it, the ill omen of this terrible rain.

He and Mrs. Knight left the Mansion that day, in the pouring rain [and] were driven over to Ron [A. Ronald] Button's apartment, who was the state treasurer in Knight's administration. I've forgotten who told me--I suppose Knight did himself--that they were going to spend the night there because they couldn't fly down [to Los Angeles]. It was impossible weather to fly in. Of course, we're going back a few years. We have wrecks these days, but you just didn't fly in that kind of weather in those days.

Lemmon: Anyhow, then in came [Pat] Brown, in his usual whirlwind deal. He didn't even know my name by this point. He turned around and he said, "Do you know where Goodwin Knight is?" I said, "Yes, Governor." (He had been sworn in the morning, and we were in the afternoon.) I said, "Yes, Governor," and I told him where [Knight] was.

He said, "Well, you get a hold of him [Knight] and tell him that my limousine and my airplane are at his disposal any time he wants to use them, tomorrow or the next day, whenever he can get off. I don't want him to feel that we're just going to dump him."

I said, "Certainly."

He said, "Now you be sure when you get that message through to him, personally, you come and tell me."

I did. It was a very nice beginning. It made me feel good. I was smiling, quietly, to myself because of what Goodie had said as he left, "You'll never be happy." I thought, well, I don't know. We'll see.

I was--very, very happy with Pat Brown. Unlike Goodie, he [Brown] was one moment very mean, and the next minute he was "I don't know what I would do without you" sort of thing.

Sharp: I would imagine that you had quite a bit of pressure in managing who was going to talk to the governor and try to make some decisions.

Lemmon: Fortunately they were so busy that weekend, I spent the whole weekend down there, Sarah.

Sadie was still here, in the office. All the new staff were very kind, very nice to let her stay. Governor Brown asked her to stay but she didn't want to. She had been recently married and she lived here for a while but she just didn't want to work for Pat Brown.

So, she was in here clearing out a lot of the papers and so forth. [with emphasis] They gave her an office to do that, just like Goodie Knight lived at the Senator Hotel for about the first week after he became governor because Mrs. Earl Warren was still cleaning out the Mansion. Thirteen years later, I guess she had a lot of stuff to move.

But, I just went into Adrienne's room and asked her for her personal index wheel. I asked her and she, of course, said, "Go right ahead."

I just started making copies of the cards on the wheel.

Lemmon: Then, I read [also] every newspaper from the minute he was elected governor of California to find out who was going to come on his staff-- It was just the idea that I might stay. I began to collect, right away, the numbers in our card file of people he would be interested in talking to, such as of course, his mother, Ida Brown; his sister; her sister. By the way, May Layne Bonnell on the staff was Mrs. Brown's sister. So, I knew that she was related before May came on the staff. And, who the daughters were married to, how many kids they had and all the rest of it was all on the wheel. I just hoped and prayed that, when he buzzed out and said, "Get me so and so," that [I knew them].

After I had my operation I was gone for almost a month, and Helen came in. Afterwards, when we became such good friends she said, "Maryalice, oh, I didn't know whether I was going to last or not. He came out yelling, 'Where is Lou?'" And I said, "Lou who?" He said, "Oh, never mind!"

It turned out he wanted Lou Carter, his highway patrol driver. So, he found somebody else that knew who "Lou who" was, and got Lou became he wanted to go someplace, I guess.

That takes me way back to my first few days when I worked for Earl Warren. Margaret Bryan said, "You're staying tonight." I had a date. So, I did [stay]. I had to cancel out. She wasn't the kind of person that taught you very much of anything. So, I typed some letters for him [Warren] and took them in and he buzzed out and said, "Miss"--didn't know my name--"I'm going now."

I said, "Well, good night Governor."

I finished typing the last letters on my desk. I just happened to go out to get a drink of water and, here he was, still sitting at his desk looking very angry. Well, you were supposed to buzz his highway patrol driver and tell him that the governor was ready to go. I never made that mistake again.

Sharp: I can imagine not!

Lemmon: But, for your information, he knew my name the next morning because he said to the driver, "Grrrrrrr! Why were you late?" And the driver said, "Governor, you have a new girl."

He said, "What's her name?" [forcefully in a gruff tone of voice]

Lemmon: That's the way I learned some of the stuff I learned.

Sharp: You have to just get it all yourself. It sounds like a sink or swim kind of operation.

Lemmon: Yes, it is.

V SUMMING UP

Lemmon: And then they [the governors] get very impatient. They get spoiled, too, Sarah. After they have one person, they know how you're going to react and they don't want anybody else.

I had the emergency operation, and they [Governor and Mrs. Brown] were so kind as to send me a lovely bouquet in the hospital. That raised my feelings, that maybe the job would still be there when I got back. Definitely Helen Amick had enjoyed the experience, she said, but she certainly wouldn't have that as a full time deal. She was older and no way did she want that kind of harassment taking place.

People would harass you on the phone--[like] the guy ringing from the public--and I got to the point where I remember Pat Brown patted me on the back a couple [of] times when he came out and heard me say, "They couldn't pay me enough to listen to this kind of language. I'm hanging up." And, I would!

You get abuse, and are called foul names. Callers start calling your boss nasty names and so on. It wasn't worth it.

Sharp: That finishes all my questions. You've told me a lot more than I had even imagined went on, which is exactly what we like to have happen! Getting to understand the day-by-day procedure of what the governor's office is, and how it runs--

Lemmon: This might be interesting too, Sarah. Both in Goodwin Knight, and certainly Earl Warren's and into Pat Brown's offices, it was a structure--I keep using that word-- We had a calendar. Today, this isn't done that way anymore. I don't know that much about it in this administration, but I know it to be a fact.

Of course you've met Jackie Habecker I assume.

Sharp: No, I haven't.

Lemmon: She came, I believe, in Goodwin Knight's administration towards the tail end. Madeline Doty was the receptionist.

Jackie Habecker was saying to me the other day that, when I was up there handling the appointments and telephone calls, she knew exactly who was going to come through that door to see the governor.

On a rare occasion--during Knight's and Brown's administrations, you'd bring somebody that you didn't want anybody in the front to know about, up his elevator. I would ride down to the basement, meet personal friends, lobbyists, labor leaders with the key to the elevator and bring them up into his study so the press would not know that the governor was meeting with this particular person. This was always at the governor's request.

Then, I would buzz out to her to inform her who was with the governor, it was on the QT, and that I would judge it would tie him up for half an hour, forty-five minutes. It was one of those sudden things that came and went.

The rest of the time she got the confidential calendar. The press did not get the same calendar but one on which were deleted names we didn't want the press to know about. It was generally the press secretary that made the decision--Jack Burby in Pat Brown's administration.

Then, she was in the position to say, "He's in a meeting." It made for a nice, smooth-working deal. But, times have changed.

I think on into the Pat Brown administration too, he perhaps delved more into his departments. Of course, he restructured the cabinet, and so forth. Pat Brown was in more constant meetings with departmental people than Goodwin Knight ever was.

Sharp: That's the feeling that I get from other interviewees, too.

Lemmon: Yes. Very definitely. He had meetings and telephone calls once a week with the principals. Robert Bradford was a constant--

Sharp: Who was he?

Lemmon: Director of the Department of Public Works. At the end of the Pat Brown administration, he was in the (Old Sacramento) Redevelopment Commission. He's passed away. But he was one of the very important people.

Sharp: Tom Bright said that Public Works was one of the major departments. I think, perhaps, it goes hand in hand with the freeway development during Governor Knight's administration which was one of the major events.

Lemmon: Yes. Just like the state colleges with Brown, and the water system for Brown, which really had its beginnings--earlier.

Sharp: Surely.

Lemmon: It's like, as I recall, the Brown administration took credit for the acquisition of Hearst's San Simeon property as part of the park system. The negotiations began back in the Knight administration.

Another thing I recall was Goodwin Knight's very, very deep interest in the elderly. He was deeply concerned about people on welfare, and particularly the elderly. It was one of the legislative bills he was particularly interested in, personally.

Sharp: Yes, I see. Well, I think that's all of my questions.

Lemmon: Good! [cheerfully expressed]

Transcriber: Nicole Bouché
Final Typist: Marie Herold

TAPE GUIDE -- Maryalice Lemmon

Date of interview: 31 May 1979

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PAUL MASON

Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library

University of California
Berkeley, California

Governmental History Documentation Project
Goodwin Knight/Edmund Brown, Sr. Era

Paul Mason

COVERING THE LEGISLATURE FOR GOVERNOR GOODWIN J. KNIGHT

An Interview Conducted by
James H. Rowland
in 1979

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BIOGRAPHY -- PAUL MASON

Paul Mason was born in Idaho and grew up there.

He studied law at Stanford University and also received a masters degree in political science, writing a thesis on Legislative Procedure. Was admitted to the California Bar in 1923. Worked for the State Senate during the 1923 session. Was appointed Assistant Legislative Counsel in 1924 and served until 1927. Practiced law in Sacramento with Senator, and later, Judge Inman and acted as parliamentarian of the Senate during sessions. During 1930 and 1931 he compiled the Annotated Constitution of California which is a two volume work of about two thousand four hundred pages.

He is also the author of Mason's Manual of Legislative Procedure, which is a compilation of the law governing decision making in public bodies. This manual is used in all of the state legislatures and adopted by most of them as their official guide on procedure. It is now being reprinted.

Mr. Mason revised the rules of the California Legislature in 1939 to bring the procedure out of the middle ages and into modern times. He also revised the procedure and organization of the Wisconsin Legislature in 1964 and did the same thing for the State of Illinois in 1966. A few years ago a commission that was studying the effectiveness of legislative bodies selected five state legislatures as being the best. Three of them were California, Wisconsin and Illinois.

Mr. Mason has engaged in many other activities. Among them are the following. He taught on a number of occasions including a year at the Southern Illinois University. Served five years on National Conference on Uniform State laws. Was Director of Motor Vehicles in California for five years and President of the American Association of Motor Vehicles Administrators. Was Legislative Secretary to Governor Goodwin Knight during the years that he was Governor. Was a member of the Constitution Revision Commission of California and a member of its executive and drafting committees.

Mr. Mason has served as parliamentarian for many public groups and voluntary associations. It is his opinion that the purpose of rules of procedure is to aid organizations in reaching decisions, on matters before them, in the simplest and most direct manner. He believes that Parliamentary Law is in fact law, that the courts have the final decision as to what the law is, and that all actions taken in making a decision must comply with the law or run the risk of being upset by anyone who contests them.

PAUL MASON
Director

PAUL MASON was born in Idaho and was educated in schools of Idaho and Utah, interrupting education to enlist for infantry officer training, 1918. Received Bachelor's Degree, 1920. Later attended Stanford University, where he submitted a thesis on Procedure in the California Legislature, and was granted Master's Degree in Political Science, 1923. Admitted to Cal. State Bar, September, 1923, and entered private law practice for a time. Assistant Minute Clerk and File Clerk in the Senate in 1923. The Assistant Legislative Counsel, 1925 and 1927 Sessions. Chief Assistant Secretary of the Senate until 1931, when he became Parliamentarian. Between 1931 and 1933 Sessions, he compiled the *Annotated Edition of the State Constitution*, and has prepared revised editions published in 1946 and 1953. In 1935 he compiled *Mason's Manual of Legislative Procedure* which has been adopted by the Senate and Assembly, and has since been adopted and widely used in other state legislatures and organizations. A revised edition of the *Manual* was published in 1953. Appointed Chief, Division of Drivers Licenses, Department of Motor Vehicles, 1936, a position he held until appointed to Directorship by Governor Goodwin J. Knight, November 1, 1953. Past President, American Assn. Motor Vehicle Administrators, Western Region; and member, committees framing uniform vehicle code, uniform traffic laws, financial responsibility laws, and other model vehicle laws. Appointed member, Cal. Commission of Uniform State Laws, Dec. 1, 1953. During 1954 Budget and Extraordinary Sessions, he served as Legislative Secretary to the Governor. Married, and father of five children. Association memberships include: American Legion; Shrine; American Society for Public Administration; and Governmental Research Association.

INTERVIEW HISTORY

Paul Mason was interviewed by the Regional Oral History Office for the Goodwin Knight-Edmund G. Brown, Sr. era segment of its Governmental History Documentation Project. Mr. Mason's extensive state government career including his role as senate parliamentarian, auditor for the Board of Equalization, director of the Department of Motor Vehicles, and executive and legislative secretary for Governor Knight, made him a valuable contributor to our documentation of the 1953-1966 period in state government.

Paul Mason was born in rural Idaho near the Wyoming border and Grand Teton Mountains. With a family oriented to education--both his grandfather and father were teachers--he was raised in a learning environment. With fragile health at an early age, he spent his formative years at home reading from the well-stocked family library. After completing his secondary education at local schools, he earned a bachelor degree at Brigham Young University in Utah and returned to Idaho to teach and administer a local rural high school. Venturing to California in 1921 to earn a master of arts degree in political science at Stanford University, he developed an interest in law and legislative procedure. His law studies at Stanford and his thesis on California legislative procedure earned him, upon passing the state bar exam, the title of attorney and a position in state senate as minute clerk. Once in state government, he took an active interest in interpreting and re-writing state documents. Among the many projects he completed were an annotated edition of the state constitution, an annotated edition of the state vehicle act, and Mason's Manual of Legislative Procedure, the latter a widely used document by state legislatures nation-wide.

Unofficially known as senate parliamentarian, his expertise on governmental procedure and organization was actively sought by other state agencies. He served on loan from the senate as auditor to the Board of Equalization in the mid-1930s, and later moved to the Department of Motor Vehicles to become chief of the division of drivers' licenses where he streamlined the licensing procedure. His contact with Goodwin Knight began when Knight ran for lieutenant governor in 1946. When Knight assumed the governorship in 1953, he recruited Mason to become acting executive director of the governor's office. Mason soon became Knight's trusted colleague and legislative secretary. His recollections of the gubernatorial campaigns of 1958 and 1962 should provide the researcher with an intriguing profile of Knight and other state-wide Republican leaders during that period of turmoil in the party.

My first interview with Mr. Mason was held at his modest but comfortable home in south Sacramento on February 22, 1979. With a soft voice, he ushered me into the living room warmed by a roaring fireplace. After customary introductions, we began the first session where, in a barely audible voice, he recited his family and personal history. As the interview

progressed, his resonance and vigor increased as he recalled his early state governmental career and his impressions of Goodwin Knight and the staffing of the governor's office. Our second and final interview was held again at his home on March 16, 1979. After prefacing the second session with an apology for his previous digressions, he eagerly began the interview with concluding remarks on the staffing of the governor's office. Included in the final interview were his remembrances of the California Water Plan battle in the legislature, the liquor control controversy, his duties as legislative secretary to Governor Knight, and the 1958 and 1962 campaign intrigue in the Republican party.

After rough editing, the interview transcript was forwarded to Mr. Mason for review. He returned the manuscript to our office after meticulously screening it page-by-page, deleting sensitive references, and expanding on certain passages. His expansion, however, demanded a second review to clarify more ambiguities. After a quick second review, Mr. Mason again returned the manuscript, which with editor's annotations, was finally prepared for final typing.

Although Mr. Mason did digress from the interview topics and had difficulty recalling specific personalities, he did provide researchers with a wealth of treasured recollections of Governor Goodwin Knight that will add to the portrait of the late governor. Combined with his own valuable contributions to state government, the Paul Mason memoir will be a keystone in the historical framework of California government in the 1953-1966 era.

James H. Rowland
Interviewer/Editor

20 May 1980
Regional Oral History Office
486 The Bancroft Library
University of California at Berkeley

I PERSONAL BACKGROUND

[Interview 1: February 22, 1979]##

Family Genealogy

Rowland: You know a little bit about what we're doing at the Bancroft Library and on our Goodwin Knight-Pat Brown project.

Mason: Yes, I have some idea.

Rowland: And you have our introductory letter, which explains the purpose of our project in detail.

Mason: [going through papers] I suppose I have that in here.

Rowland: I think that's in your papers there.

Mason: This is it.

Rowland: This is a copy of the outline I gave you. The first thing that we start off with is your family geneology and your childhood education, for those historians interested in that material.

Mason: I'm a boy from the back country.

Rowland: From the back country.

Mason: Yes. I was born in a little town in Idaho named Parker. It is just west of the Teton mountains which are in Wyoming. That country was without paved roads and almost without automobiles. I don't know how far you want to go back.

Rowland: Let's go back as far as you--

##This symbol indicates that a tape or a segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes see page 95.

Mason: My father's parents were born in England and came to the United States as children. They were married in Salt Lake City and my father was born there. My father, as a young man, went to Idaho and settled in the upper Snake River Valley with the earliest settlers. The earliest of my mother's American ancestors missed the boat. He got on the Speedwell instead of the Mayflower and did not arrive in America until the second year.

As for education, I attended grade school at Parker, high school at Ricks Academy, Rexburg; secured a bachelors degree at Brigham Young University at Provo, Utah; secured a masters degree at Stanford and studied law there. I passed the state bar examination in 1923 at Sacramento.

My family has been very interested in education. My grandfather, my father, my four sisters and I have taught school. I was principal of the Parker high school in 1919-1920. My last teaching was at "Poly" high in San Francisco and at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois.

I enlisted in the army in 1918 and was in an officers training camp in Texas when the armistice came. My family was engaged in farming.

I was born in 1898. They didn't register births until 1905 in Idaho, but the Social Security admininstration picked up my birth record from the census of 1900. I was born prematurely, and the family for some time despaired of my living. My mother kept me out of school until I was eight years old because of the condition of my health. Then the rest of the years as a child I got about five or six months' school per year. We used to go to school when everything froze up in the fall, and we couldn't do any farm work. We were out of school in the spring the moment the land thawed. I finished grade school at Parker and then went to Ricks College. I finished the high school work there. Also did enough extra work--that I earned credit for about a year in college while I was in high school.

Rowland: Did you say you were the youngest in the family?

Mason: No, I'm the fifth of ten. In 1918, I enlisted in SATC--Student Army Training Corps, at Provo, Utah. When the armistice came along the eleventh of November, I was back in Texas on the train going to Waco [Texas] to the Infantry Officer's Training School. I was discharged in December, 1918 and went back to finish my college studies.

I then went back to Idaho and taught a year in the local high school, where I was principal. And then I went down to Stanford.

Earning Degrees at Stanford

Rowland: Stanford University?

Mason: Yes. Stanford University--I arrived in California in September, 1921.

Rowland: Were you the first in your family to be college educated, or were others in your family also going to college?

Mason: --others in the family. My oldest sister went down to Utah to the agricultural college for a year. Schools were distant and hard to get to. Three sisters and a brother went to college.

Rowland: Now at Stanford, what studies did you--?

Mason: I was registered at first as a political science student. I took some law courses, among them constitutional law, and I was so interested that I changed my registration over to law. When I came to graduate, they wouldn't give me credit for some of the required courses toward the law school graduation without retaking them. So I didn't because I was not a registered law school student when I took them. I took a master's degree in political science and took the bar examination.

Rowland: [laughs] You did the end run around law school.

Mason: Yes. I did go back later and took a quarter toward a doctor's degree. But the time and place was illustrated by the amount of time spent riding horses.

Rowland: Were there any important books around your home that you remember reading?

Mason: For the time and place my family had a good library. The book I remember first was Robert's Rules of Order. Then I remember there were some scientific books.

Rowland: What attracted you to Robert's Rules of Order?

Mason: I was interested in public affairs and public meetings, doing things publicly. My father had purchased the Robert's book three years before I was born. In 1935 and following years I wrote a book on legislative procedures which is based on court decisions and disputes some of Robert's rules. It is known as Mason's Manual.

Rowland: In your later years, or your high school years, were you active in school politics?

Mason: I was quite active in debate and drama. I wasn't too active in school politics. At B.Y.U. I was president of the students from Idaho.

Rowland: How about at Stanford? Were you active in school politics there?

Mason: No. Soon after I got there, I had quite a breakdown in my health that was very debilitating. And most of the time I was studying law, I was having trouble with my vision. It was a part of the same problem. I was seeing double. I had to do my reading with one eye at a time. But I came through, and I passed the examinations at Stanford.

II BUILDING A STATE GOVERNMENT CAREER

Rewriting Legislative Documents

Rowland: How did you get involved in state government?

Mason: I can tie that together quickly. In working on the master's thesis, I got acquainted with the legislators.

Rowland: That sounds familiar. [laughs]

Mason: Among them Senator Herbert C. Jones of San Jose. There were a lot of things that I could not understand so I went to San Jose to ask the senator some questions. When I had finished the talk the senator said to me, "How would you like to see the legislature in session?" I said, "I'd like to!" and he said, "You be in Sacramento next Monday morning and I think I can get you a job." So the next Monday morning I was in Sacramento. I went up on the old river boat. Senator Jones was not there. He was out with one of the other members appearing before the Supreme Court on the Wright Act. (That was the state prohibition act.)

And he got me the job. He had his patronage taken. In those days, members were assigned an amount of patronage, usually one person to each member. A member got a stenographer, or if he didn't need one, he'd get a sergeant-at-arms or some other appointment. Senator Jones had a stenographer and so his patronage was taken, but he signed me on for--

Rowland: What was taken?

Mason: Patronage. His right to appoint somebody. With Senator [A.E.] Osborne from Agnew, Santa Clara County, I worked as secretary of the committee on commerce and navigation, which was Senator Osborne's committee [each senator was a chairman of some committee in those days]. I particularly worked as the assistant minute clerk. After the (30 day recess we had in those days) recess, I was the file clerk.

Mason: You're familiar with the file clerk, I presume. The file clerk makes up the list of bills for consideration by the houses in the order they are to be considered.

During the recess, I was mailing clerk. And after adjournment I was a cleanup clerk.

Rowland: This is while you were still working on your master's degree at Stanford?

Mason: I completed the work for the degree before going to Sacramento. Later, I went back for another quarter's work toward a doctoral degree.

Rowland: What are your thoughts on your getting into the legislature? Did you see it as just a coincidence that you had been working on this?

Mason: I was really deeply interested in legislation. I was interested in the legislature and legislative work. That began when as a child I discovered Robert's Rules of Order and continued with my college work and masters thesis which was entitled "Procedure in the California Legislature." Joe Beek was Secretary of the Senate. He was elected in 1919 and again in 1923 and following years. We were friends and worked on many things together.

One thing that I had noticed was that the legislature got out an edition of the constitution which was made available to the people and to the schools particularly. This book contained the State and Federal Constitutions, the Articles of Confederation, the Bill of Rights and other constitutional documents. I wrote a Constitutional History of California which I used as an introduction to the California Constitution. With a little revision to keep the statistics up to date, this is still carried in the constitution that the state publishes and distributes.

In 1923 the legislature passed the California Vehicle Act and revised it substantially in 1925 and 1927. There was so much public interest in this act that the legislature had a special edition published which was widely distributed. I compiled this law with annotations. It was my introduction to motor vehicle administration.

In 1931, I got out the first large edition of the state constitution, and here is a copy. Here are the notes to the cases. This is the 1933 edition. Then I got one that's somewhat larger, brought up to date in 1946.

At that time, I had the copyright to it, and I got this out for Bancroft-Whitney Publishers. Then I sold [the copyright] to them about four years ago. So now this has become the Bancroft-Whitney edition. So that goes with our terms. But I got out the first edition of the constitution with notes to judicial decisions.

Rowland: Getting back to your childhood education years, were you involved in church activities?

Mason: Quite active. I went to church very regularly on Sunday and took a part in other church activities.

Rowland: What church was this?

Mason: Mormon. That's what brought my whole family west. [tape stopped for phone interruption]

Rowland: When you were writing these books on the California constitution, what was your position in the legislature?

Mason: Assistant Secretary of the Senate, most of the time.

Rowland: And later, did you become parliamentarian?

Mason: Never officially. They never officially had one. I've acted as parliamentarian. I worked for the legislature through 1933. In the beginning of 1924, I became the Assistant Legislative Counsel, and I was there until 1927, about three years. Then I was doing a number of other things. I got out the Blue Book of 1928. For the state printer, I got out a pamphlet on publication of notices--the different kinds, where they had to publish it and how long and so on, which was strictly a legal book.

Then in 1933, when prohibition was repealed, I went to work for the state Board of Equalization, under the classification of auditor in the liquor enforcement division. This was before we had our present effective civil service, and I was not on the payroll as an auditor.

Rowland: Auditor of--what was that again?

Mason: On the Board of Equalization. My special job was to check over the applications and reports and have the licenses issued to those who qualified and set up hearings for those that weren't. That was quite an active job. One thing that was interesting about it, when Bonelli got in trouble, you could see so completely what was going on from the records which came over my desk.*

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*William Bonelli was a member of the state Board of Equalization representing the fourth district encompassing Los Angeles.

Mason: They [Board of Equalization] got local reports from the police and the sheriffs, and then they had the state divided into areas with a staff office. They reported on all the requests for liquor licenses. The location of the premises was one of the most important things--and the reputation, qualifications of the applicants.

It happened that in an area here the Board of Equalization pretty much divided the state up in four divisions, for the four elected members, who, with the addition of the controller, made up the board. They began to get a lot of rejections. People who had been getting licenses with no trouble began to get turned down, and quite a number of licenses were being held up.

Rowland: How did you handle those corrupt activities in the Board of Equalization?

Mason: Well, there was no plan of handling them at the time. After they collected quite a group of them, Bonelli took a trip north, and just incidentally, the cases began to be cleared up. An applicant would have his license held up. Then it was released. After someone called on him he would get the license. Following that, rather promptly, there were stories about how much it cost to get a license released.

A thing of that kind gets around. A person who was held up for a payment--even though he had paid (and he was liable, too)--resented it, and he would begin to tell people what had happened and what he thought about it. There were quite a number of cases, and I could've made a list of a page or two of them myself.

Rowland: Did you try to bring this to public attention?

Mason: No. I had nothing to do with that. I called attention to it by alerting the secretary of the board, Pierce.

Rowland: John Peirce?

Mason: No, Dixwell Pierce. The district attorneys, I think, began to get a hold of it. It didn't take long. That happened quickly. But of course, he [Bonelli] went to Arizona, where he had some land, and before they could extradite him, he went on to Mexico.

Joining the Department of Motor Vehicles

Rowland: It sounds like that topic is going to overlap with a few other topics we're going to talk about during the Goodwin Knight period, and one of them being the liquor control controversy. But turning to the Department of Motor Vehicles, when did you first go into the Department of Motor Vehicles? What was your role?

Mason: I think it was in 1936. I was over at the motor vehicle department with some friends of mine. I'd never been in the department before, and I looked in and said, "Say, I'd like to join this department. I'd like to work here." A few weeks later, I'd just gone home from work on a Friday afternoon--or was it Saturday noon in those days?--I was to start my vacation Monday morning. I got a telephone call, and I was asked if I wanted to go to work for Motor Vehicles. And I said "yes." That was the shortest vacation that I ever got.

Senator R.R. Ingels from Mendocino County, who was known to me from my work in the senate-- That's when Governor Frank Merriam took over from Governor Rolph, and Ingels was appointed director of Motor Vehicles. Senator Ingels asked me if I would go to work for the Department of Motor Vehicles.

I said, "Yes, I'll come down right now."

"No," he said, "you needn't bother to do that. Monday morning is soon enough." And so, on Monday I then went to work. Almost immediately, there was a--well, this is what happened: the new civil service law was adopted at the last previous election went into effect. When they went under the civil service department, my predecessor, the man who was then chief of the division of drivers' licenses and adjustments, and a lawyer, was not continued in the new position, which made a vacancy. I took an examination, and I passed, topping the civil service list. I was appointed there. I worked there for two or three months, first under a contract between the Board of Equalization and the motor vehicle department. Finally the classification came out, and they classified me in a position in Board of Equalization. That had been a problem of mine. I was quite unhappy with it. The first paper that came through suggested that my position was that of an intermediate clerk. They first classified positions by the number of people supervised. But they finally came out and it was re-classified as "tax attorney."

But I was already in Motor Vehicles, and I stayed there. I was appointed, within a few months, chief of division of drivers' licenses.

Rowland: How did you reorganize the DMV?

Mason: It wasn't too much of an overhead organization, at that time at least.

Rowland: Could you clarify that?

Mason: We had what you might call the "political management," that is, the director and the deputy director, and then there were three divisions--highway patrol, drivers' licenses, and registration, and later there was accounting. The division chiefs run their own affairs, pretty largely. We had some directors who didn't spend much time with the department, but the top staff got together and ran things. They ran quite smoothly.

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Mason: In the earlier years the divisions had quite complete control over the work of each division. Later a larger department staff was developed which controlled the personnel. But the division chiefs handled the policies, but they'd lost much of the control over the personnel.

In drivers' license we were just at the point of beginning to examine applicants for the drivers' license. The auto clubs had been doing that and giving their own people licenses and using it as a method of solicitation of business, advertising it as one of the advantages of belonging to the auto club--you got a license. That they used to make good on it was the thing that bothered me. If a person was good enough to have insurance with the auto club, he got a license automatically.

Rowland: [laughs] In our day and age it sounds strange, but that was a different era.

Mason: Well, I'll tell you how we took care of that. We had an applicant come in who had passed a civil service examination and wanted to work as a driver's license examiner. We had no vacancies. I talked to the deputy attorney general. He said, "We can take care of that. Get me a complaint about unlicensed examiners doing that work while persons who are qualified by civil service to examine driver license applicants are available." And he said, "No, the department couldn't even permit the work to be done by unlicensed examiners for nothing. Driver license examiners had to be people who were qualified under civil service to conduct the examination, and the auto club no longer could do it because they had no such persons on their staffs." [laughs] We had a lot of things that were interesting to me, and might be to you, but probably not of concern here.

Oh, I'll give you one example of how things worked. They had a sheet about five by eight inches in which they had a written examination, and they took that out and used the same one everywhere

Reading Boy Scout Traffic Safety Announcement, ca. 1953. Left to right: Senator Hugh M. Burns, Paul Mason, Senator George Miller, Jr.

Awards Presentation, 1953. Left to right: Frank B. Durkee, Director of Public Works; Governor Goodwin J. Knight; Bernard R. Caldwell, Commissioner of California Highway Patrol; Paul Mason

Mason: on all applicants for years. Anyone who looked at it, who had any judgement, could pass it. One of the things you could do, you could check all the longer questions "correct" and you'd pass the examination.

They also had questions like, "Is it proper to drive after you've been drinking alcoholic liquor?" They had been using the same questions for years.

Among other things, they had one woman that had been working full-time for years, folding the form when it comes in and putting it into the file. The first thing we did was to get a folding machine so that she could do the job in a half-hour instead of having one person full-time and others part-time folding the application by hand. The machine cost a few days salary for one person. Then we separated the applications from the examination form and began to give the real examination.

Rowland: Yes. With changing questions, you mean.

Mason: And getting so many questions and shifting and changing them that the chance of studying an old examination and getting a new one that--if you used the answers on it--it wouldn't work.

Then there was the driver improvement program. The law required that the courts report all of the more serious traffic violations to the Department of Motor Vehicles. The parking violations were not reported. When a driver had accumulated a record of several violations like speeding or not stopping at stop lights he was called in for an interview and usually warned. If the violations continued the license might be suspended or revoked. Suspensions or revocations and heavier fines were imposed on drivers by the courts or by the department when certain convictions were reported.

III PAINTING A PORTRAIT OF GOODWIN J. KNIGHT

First Encounters

Rowland: I have a set of questions on Goodwin Knight: several questions have come up about Goodwin Knight, and one of those is that he was a very ambitious politician. Before I touch on that, maybe you would want to give us some background on when you first got involved and met Goodwin Knight and started working with him.

Mason: Let me take one other thing about my background that might become interesting. I passed the bar examination in 1923, and then I worked for the legislature. I wrote the article for the Bar magazine about drafting of bills, and that was when I first came in. Then I prepared the annotations to the constitution and revised them several times. When Knight was governor, I was put into the conference on commissioners on uniform state laws.

Rowland: This was when Goodwin Knight became governor?

Mason: Yes.

Rowland: When Earl Warren left for the U.S. Supreme Court?

Mason: Yes. I was chairman of the committee on compacts, wrote the compact report. I was a member of the committee on uniform traffic laws and ordinances, the drafting committee that drafted the financial responsibility law, also of the committee that revised the [vehicle] registration law. It was done under the auspices, actually, of the American Bar Association, of which I was also a member. They were concerned with the motor vehicle title problems only, and financing, not with the operation of vehicles. So I represented the commissioners representing the revision of the registration to both the American Bar Association and the motor vehicle administrators. Of course, we didn't adopt it wholesale into the state, but we'd pick it up by sections there.

Mason: I have spent a good deal of my extra time, over practically my whole life, on that sort of project. Another thing that I might mention, in 1939-41, I revised the laws and joint rules and senate rules in the State of California. This was done under the direction of Senator Deuel, chairman of the committee.

In 1964, I went back to Wisconsin and revised the rules and the organization of the Wisconsin legislature. I was working on that for the better part of year-- Then in 1966, I went back to Illinois and did the same kind of a job for the Illinois legislature.

Rowland: When was that--in '66, you say?

Mason: 'Sixty-six. But in that case, to help finance the revision, I was paid financed by the university, and I taught a course in government at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

Rowland: Getting back to my question, when did you first meet Goodwin Knight?

Mason: I met Goodwin Knight first at the Hayward Hotel in Los Angeles, his headquarters when he was first running for lieutenant governor. I was introduced to him by a man who I'd known in Sacramento and who'd been quite active in politics for a good many years.

Rowland: Who was that?

Mason: He was Harvey Mydland, from North Dakota, and was a member of the Republican Assembly here in Sacramento--that's not the official body. Harvey had been quite active in campaigns, and was working on the Knight campaign.

I had met him off and on for some time. I really had nothing to do with the campaign except give my friendly support. Then he came up--

Rowland: What do you mean by "friendly support?"

Mason: I didn't get out and do any active campaigning. Wherever I had a chance to put in a good word, I did, of course.

Rowland: Did you sign any endorsements?

Mason: I don't remember singing any endorsements.

Rowland: What attracted you to Goodwin Knight?

Mason: It's a long story. Suppose I fill in as we go.

Rowland: Okay.

Mason: Three days before the next session met after Knight was elected, I got a call from Harvey Mydland, and he said, "The governor would like to have a talk with you."

I said, "Sure, fine. Do you want to come out?"

"Come out when?" I was living out on 36 Way in Sacramento at that time. Knight and Mydland came out early in the evening and stayed until or a little after midnight. We were discussing procedures. Knight was a lawyer, and had been involved in a lot of public appearances, but he wasn't particularly familiar with legislative procedure. So he said he'd like to have me come down, and I made arrangements with the Department of Motor Vehicles to go over and help.

I had been acting as parliamentarian in the senate for a number of sessions at the request of the senate. The procedure was, the president pro tem would write the Motor Vehicle department and ask them if they could borrow my services for the session, and they said, "Yes, it would be all right." There was no change in compensation or anything else. I just was there and helped during the hours that the senate was in session.

So I worked as an employee of Motor Vehicles and spent what time was necessary at the legislature. I aimed to be there only when they were in session, and that isn't a great deal of time.

Rowland: What was your status in the legislature?

Mason: I was a "loanee." [laughs]

Rowland: A "loanee." You were informally known as the parliamentarian, but formally know just as a "loanee?" [laughs]

Mason: Yes. The theaters and other groups used to hand out passes to the shows, things like that, to the legislators and staff. But I never got any because my name was never on the lists of members or staff.

Well, it was decided that I come down to the senate and help Governor Knight regularly at the session. He was a very agreeable person to work with. I liked him very much. I was with him a good deal. Some of his friends tried to get him to run for U.S. Senator. It looked like he wasn't going to get that much chance to get anywhere from lieutenant governor, but he never really wanted to go to the U.S. Senate.

Rowland: When was this?

Mason: That was during the period--six or seven years--when he was lieutenant governor.

Rowland: Who urged him to seek a senate seat? Was this a state senate seat you're talking about?

Mason: No, U.S. Senate. I can't name anyone who particularly did ask him, but there was quite a bit of discussion of it. You say he was noted as being ambitious, but he wasn't ambitious for that.

Rowland: Well, the next question is, what attracted you to Goodwin Knight?

Mason: He's just the kind of a fellow that it seems to me that you couldn't help but like him if you knew him.

Rowland: What kind of a personality did he have?

Mason: A very bouyant, outgoing, happy personality. He was always dancing a little jig. I don't know where he got it, but he was always doing it. And pleasant about things, cooperative.

Rowland: Was he a "loyal Republican?" Or was he seemingly like Earl Warren, a bi-partisan?

Mason: Everybody, practically, in those days that would go back as far as he had, at least, were likely to be quite non-partisan.

Rowland: Because of cross-filing?

Mason: Cross-filing, primarily, was what did it. The Southern Pacific [Railroad] machine wasn't partisan. They were interested in what they got out of it. Hiram Johnson and his supporters were opposed to them, and they stayed opposed to them, but they didn't break up into parties. There were proposals to make the state government entirely non-partisan, but one of the proposals came to vote and was defeated. Then the [progressives] provided by statute that a person could run on both tickets, and that accomplished the same thing.

There was one time, I remember, checking over the list of candidates for the legislature at a primary election where one could--anyone I would say, who had any familiarity with the the legislature could go through the list and name every person who would be elected. Almost all legislative candidates ran on both tickets but until the later years other candidates ran on a single ticket. When Warren ran the last time he won both nominations.

We had quite a number of cases then where senators like Senator [James H.] Allen, Senator [Charles H.] Deuel, Senator [Herbert W.] Slater, who were Democrats, were elected by large majorities in strongly Republican districts. You had some

Mason: cases--Boggs of Stockton was a Democrat who was elected in a Republican district. There were quite a lot of them. You had two or three Democrats elected in Republican districts. There seemed no logical explanation of why districts voted partisan the way they did. That was one of the questions that bothered me and caused me to talk to Senator Jones, that got me in Sacramento. The answer is that the voters simply did not follow party lines. Candidates ran on both party tickets.

Rowland: What was Goodie Knight's working style? Was he an energetic, rambunctious hard worker, or was someone who--?

Mason: He was quite energetic. I wouldn't say he was ever rambunctious. He was quite careful, generally quite methodical, but he was generally very happy about everything. He, incidentally--a little background--had been a miner. His uncles, his family, had been in the mining business and some had made large amounts of money. He had been as a miner, and he still had some mining interests that are possibly important down in Mojave--his wife has them still. She's tried to get the mine opened again with the new price of gold.

He was physically a very vigorous person. He was rather short, fairly heavily built, not fat. Strong, broad shoulders. He'd done a lot of mining himself, and he had enjoyed it.

Rowland: It showed in his body.

Mason: Knight wasn't a fellow who stayed with anything too long and plot and plan like some people do who work for half a lifetime on some project. He didn't stay with it that long.

A Political Philosophy of Non-partisanship

Mason: The philosophy of the Knight administration, as to legislation, I think was quite significant. It was quite different, I'd say, than any other I have ever seen. In the first place, it was quite non-partisan. That doesn't mean he wasn't loyal to his group that was with him. But he didn't feel it was his job to take over the legislative department and tell them what to do. He took rather firm stands on a few things, where he felt that he owed to the state and people to do it.

One that's prominent is liquor. Caspar Weinberger was interested in that. He was head of the committee that made studies. Weinberger drew the bill, and that bill was his. He didn't want any of them telling him what to do with it.

Rowland: That was Weinberger's bill?

Mason: Weinberger's bill. Knight, on the other hand, felt it was his bill, at least that he had part interest in the bill. He had been supporting the project from the beginning, and he felt that he was in a position to suggest to Weinberger what form it should take. I can't give you what it was about, the details, but there was some feeling, with some heat developed, as to what some of the provisions of the bill should be. Weinberger introduced it. Technically, it was his bill. Knight, as executives apparently always do in these cases, claim what they like for themselves, "That's my bill, I supported it." And sometimes the governor supported it strong enough to make it or break it, he was pretty near the author of the bill. But Weinberger was rather sure of himself and is a very competent person.

Rowland: What was Goodie Knight's relationship with Earl Warren, when Warren was governor.

Mason: Annoyance.

Rowland: Annoyance?

Mason: He was occupying the place that Knight would like to have had.

Rowland: That Knight wished to have?

Mason: Yes. But Knight undertook to go along with him, generally. In Warren's third campaign, somebody--a friend of Knight's, obviously--put up a few feelers about Knight running. "Warren had been there long enough. We'd never had a governor more than two terms, and Knight would be a proper man."

Warren was furious.

Rowland: This was in 1950?

Mason: Yes, it was '50.

Rowland: For the third term.

Mason: Yes. That a mere lieutenant governor should presume to think about running for the governorship against him. Warren was a very high-handed, hot-headed person.

Rowland: Who supported Goodwin Knight in these feelers for governor?

Mason: A group of Knight's friends, principally in Los Angeles. He had plenty of friends who would be happy to do it. He was generally quite popular with the newsmen, and Warren wasn't.

Rowland: Southern California? With Bergholz, and Squire Behrens, and Herbert Phillips?

Mason: Knight and Behrens weren't particularly friendly, personally. They were generally cooperative. When Knight was in Stanford--I've forgotten what fraternity he belonged to, but Behrens was in it, and he was already writing for the San Francisco Chronicle. He outranked Knight and he made Knight his messenger boy, to post his letters and pick up his mail and so on. [laughs] And Knight always resented that.

Rowland: Interesting, I didn't know that. Did Goodie have a lot of friends down in southern California in his campaign?

Mason: Yes. Generally, he was quite friendly with the Hearsts as well.

Rowland: The Hearst family. And he had friends on the Board of Regents?

Mason: He had quite a few friends. He only appointed three or four, but he had friends there, yes. He was a member, naturally, as lieutenant governor.

Rowland: For anyone studying Goodwin Knight, there seemed to have been a policy or ideological shift when he became governor. From my study of the state un-American activities committee, the loyalty oath question at the University of California came up in 1949 when Knight, as lieutenant governor, was most vocal in support of the loyalty oath. But later, when he became governor, he sought quite a bit of labor support, and seemed to downplay his more conservative image he had as lieutenant governor. Do you see that as a shift? What would be your perspective on that?

Mason: Knight was talked out of actively supporting the loyalty oath by members of the Board of Regents of the university.

I don't remember shifting on labor issues. The thing that hurt him most was his position against the right-to-work initiative in '58.

Perhaps the one issue which was responsible for the Republican loss in several of the states in 1958 was the right-to-work bill. One of Knight's speechwriters was approached by a labor representative to make some changes in a speech not favorable to the right-to-work. The words were scarcely a criticism but they were approved and immediately seized upon in the campaign. I asked Knight why he accepted the words and he said that there had been a vote which he thought had started the matter and he was not making a controversial statement. With an attack on the right-to-work bills the unions are able to get out practically all labor votes and they defeated the Republicans wholesale.

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Rowland: So you wouldn't say Goodwin Knight was necessarily pro-labor, although throughout all his years you would say he never tried to alienate labor.

Mason: He was quite friendly to most of labor most of the time. I remember that each session they had bills to increase the rate of workmen's compensation disability, for example. The unions were always strongly for increasing it, and Knight went along with it. I imagine Warren did too, for that matter.

Rowland: What was Knight's relationship with some national politicians, like Richard Nixon and Dwight Eisenhower?

Mason: Nixon's a long story.

Rowland: Well, let's begin in the early-- We'll get to that in the '58 and the later period there, but in the early years, when Nixon was a congressman and in that campaign against Helen Gahagan Douglas. What was Knight's relationship with--

Mason: He had none. There was quite a bit of feeling that was not favorable to Nixon generally in the Republican ranks. And of course, when he took on Helen Gahagan, he became very unpopular with the liberal Democrats.

Rowland: Why?

Mason: What they said, the things that they used to claim about and proclaim was that he had been unfair and dishonest in his campaign, that he charged her with being an active working Communist and being devoted to the Communist causes. That was the central point in all of Nixon's campaigns, and it worked for him in every one of them.

Rowland: Was Knight, as a state-wide candidate in the lieutenant governor and governor's position, aware of Nixon's power in southern California and that this might cause some changes or power plays in the Republican party?

Mason: In the early days, I think not, probably up to the time that Nixon got in the U.S. Senate. He was just an incidental party person down in the [Los Angeles] area back of the first row of hills. Nixon was not active in state politics until he ran for governor much later.

Rowland: Tell me, what was Knight's relationship with national Republican politicians, such as--let's begin first with Dwight Eisenhower.

Mason: It was not unfriendly, but Knight was not particularly impressed with Eisenhower.

Rowland: Why?

Mason: He just didn't think he was a very effective person. I don't mean to say there was anything personal against him, but he wouldn't rate him highly as a president.

Rowland: What about Robert Taft of Ohio? Was there any relationship there that you--

Mason: None that I know of.

Staffing the Governor's Office: Prominent Personalities

Rowland: Okay. The next set of questions I have are dealing with the staff structure in Knight's administration and how the staff functioned. I have here--and you have it too, on the list. This copy I have is a list of all the names of staff members for 1954-1958. If we could go down that list--most of these are just listed as "secretary" and "personal secretary." It doesn't really tell us exactly what they did.

Let's start with yourself, as acting executive secretary. You came in in 1954. Why did Knight appoint you as acting executive secretary?

Mason: I'll give you the story. It's a little--it isn't too long.

I had worked quite closely with Knight as lieutenant governor in 1953 and regarded myself as a close friend, and I'm sure he felt friendly toward me. We kept up a correspondence the year round. I was looking after a lot of things of his up here, taking care of the mail and the office and so on. It was the lieutenant governor's office, the southwest corner of the Capitol second floor. I was in touch with him, and I talked to him, and when--I've forgotten how long it was--Warren was going to be appointed, but either he wasn't appointed immediately or it didn't take effect immediately. There was a delay of a month or so there. But the moment he was out of the office, I moved in, and we began--with Knight's support and approval, of course--to organize the staff to get letters of acknowledgement. Many letters of support had come in.

Mason: I had been in the office a week or so before Governor Knight arrived. He came in with somewhat of a staff, and he had some conferences with Warren. Knight kept Warren's personal secretary on for a while, at Warren's request. Pop Small, who I'm sure you know--I don't know why he didn't continue on as a member of the staff, but he didn't. Knight brought up two people. One person was Robert G. Alderman. Alderman is an important name in this story.

Rowland: Why is he important?

Mason: He was a very influential factor, and he was involved in a number of things personally. I'll discuss further. John Synon came in a little later. John Synon had worked for the governor earlier and had been fired because he took several months' pay without doing any work. He was assigned to do certain things, and he didn't do them. He just took the money and--

Rowland: What were those certain things he was assigned?

Mason: Getting out certain reports and papers and so on. I've been trying to think of the political writer for the San Francisco Examiner--a rather sharp person.

Rowland: Jack Welter?

Mason: No.

Rowland: Mosher?

Mason: Mosher. Clint Mosher, yes.

Rowland: He just died.

Mason: Oh, I didn't know that, that Mosher's dead.

Well, later I asked Knight why he ever took him back--Synon. He said Clint Mosher asked him to, and he did it as a favor to Clint Mosher. Clint said, "I didn't mean to"--according to Knight, quoting later--"I didn't mean you should take him back. I meant that you should not let him starve."

It seems like every political officer at least has his problems with one or more people, like Nixon and the Milhous family, and Johnson and his brother. Most everybody has them.

Rowland: [laughs] Jimmy Carter and Billy Carter.

Mason: Yes. When Merriam became governor, he had a fellow who moved into the hall outside the governor's office and stayed there most every day for six or eight months. He was, he said, Merriam's representative. He had elected Merriam, and Merriam owed him anything he wanted. He could get anything for you. He was the person you were supposed to see if you wanted something from the Merriam administration. He actually worked the hall--like a picket.

Rowland: Who's this again?

Mason: I still can't remember his name. He worked the hall for months, [laughs] and the governor didn't fire him or anything. I don't know why he didn't. Perhaps he couldn't.

Rowland: I don't know if you actually answered this question. I've been writing down, rather than following, but let me throw this out again. Why did Knight structure his staff similar to Earl Warren?

Mason: It was not just similar. It was the same staff.

Rowland: It was the same staff--most of the same staff?

Mason: Knight felt that coming in as he did, he shouldn't throw everybody out. It was really Warren's term. Warren had been elected to it. He shouldn't throw them out and put his own supporters in. So the first few months, he didn't touch them. After that, if they were good--and most of them were satisfactory people--they continued. He didn't make any changes until he was later Governor. He made very few then.

So insofar as staff is concerned, state administrative department staff--I don't mean just the governor's office staff--it was practically the Warren staff that held through. Much of it stayed through Knight's first term. So it wasn't that it was alike. It was the same thing.

One thing that might be interesting--I hadn't been there long, and I noticed that there was no question about party politics. What party you belonged to meant nothing. Except I got interested, and I asked the eleven secretaries what party they belonged to, and six out of the eleven were Democrats. And they went right on working.

Rowland: Out of the staff here, that we're listing?

Mason: Yes.

Rowland: That would be a good thing to-- Was Synon?

Mason: He wasn't one of them.

Rowland: He wasn't.

Mason: He came in later. After I was executive secretary, he became executive secretary, and then he went to the Industrial Accident Commission--got a job down there, and Knight left him there.

Later he came into Governor Brown's office and he wanted something from Governor Brown. He went in to see Pat Brown. He threatened him with resigning if he didn't get it, and the office had the resignation accepted before he got out of the office. [laughter] Synon was a principal troublemaker. He was looked upon by many as unethical.

But the thing that got him in principal trouble was being drunk. He grew up or spent a lot of his early life in Florida, then moved up the coast a state or two at a time to Virginia, and later came west. Colorado was one of the states, and then southern California. He had a quite a "referee" shirt. [referring to striped clothing of convicts]

Rowland: My God!

Mason: Most of them were for drinking or--

Rowland: And he became executive secretary, you say?

Mason: Yes.

Rowland: In 1954?

Mason: Yes.

Rowland: You were acting executive secretary, and then he was appointed to the executive secretary?

Mason: Yes.

Rowland: Why?

Mason: I could never find out. Nobody made much of an issue of it except me. But at that time the job came up, and Knight was glad enough to get him out from underfoot to give him the job, which was a fair job. Synon was just delighted. He spent his time at the press club. They protested down there that he didn't do any work. They [the governor and staff] didn't want him there in the office; they wanted someone who'd do some work.

Rowland: Well, on to Newton Stearns?

Mason: Let me start with somebody else.

Rowland: Okay.

Mason: Robert G. Alderman. Alderman had handled Knight's campaign for lieutenant governor. He had been working on the campaign when Knight was elected. He just came right in automatically as the executive secretary. Then one morning Knight came in--

Rowland: Alderman came in after Synon?

Mason: Alderman was there first.

I'll tell you what happened. Knight was angry because Bob [Alderman] had gone ahead and done something that he shouldn't that would work against him [Knight] and was going to hurt him. Bob had done two things: he had told the former secretary of the league of cities, Richard Graves, who was also a member of the Governor's Advisory Committee on Civil Defense, that his resignation was accepted. Graves had done something earlier that Knight didn't like and Knight had indicated that he would like to fire him. When Graves put in his courtesy resignation to the new governor [Knight], Alderman thought it was an automatic thing to do. So he accepted it without a question. He was the man that ran against Knight for re-election the first time, and he was a good candidate from Knight's point of view [laughs] because he didn't get many votes.

Then Alderman appointed his son--Alderman's son--who'd come in out of the army at that time, where he had worked in personnel matters, to a job in one of the departments where he would deal with personnel. I remember Bob had asked me what I thought about it. I said I didn't see why not.

But he did it without getting the governor's approval, which proved unfortunate. The job was over near the Board of Equalization, where Paul Leake from Woodland had his office. Leake and Alderman both came from Woodland, and they had been very much opposed to each other. Bob Alderman had been a very active Republican, and Leake was a Democrat. They undoubtedly made an issue of it, Paul Leake and them.

So Knight was awfully wrought up and afraid that he was going to be hurt by this thing. He laid off Alderman and asked me to take over as executive secretary.

Rowland: What was the approximate date of this? Was this early on in his administration?

Mason: It was quite early in the administration.

Mason: Now, Newt Stearns was held over for some time. He'd been an active Democrat. He used to go out with the governor to organize campaigns and make campaign speeches and so on. In order not to mislead anybody, he would always tell everybody he was a Democrat. I told him that I thought he shouldn't want to mislead anybody, but it looked bad for the governor to have a campaign manager who was an active member of the opposing party; I understand he changed his registration. He was a pretty competent staff member, in the press and so on. But in the later times, when the issue developed between Knowland and Knight, he went on with the Knowland side.

Rowland: Stearns was also the pilot for Knight's plane, wasn't he?

Mason: He used to fly. Stearns was a pilot but Vern Tobin did most of the flying for the governor. There're two or three of those boys that were flyers. Going down the list, Doug Barrett--you haven't taked to him?

Rowland: We're setting up an interview with him soon.

Mason: He lives on Henry Street in Berkeley. If you want to know details, what happened and the chronology or anything of that kind, he'd be the man, probably, of the whole that could give it to you best.

Rowland: Oh, great.

Mason: He's been active in the campaigns, and I never was. He can tell you the day of the election, who were the candidates and who were elected and so on.

Babich belongs to a rather well-known family in Sacramento.

Rowland: We didn't get Barrett's party. Was Barrett a Republican or a Democrat?

Mason: Barrett began as a Republican. He was so amazed by some Republicans that he changed to Democrat. Later, he served Pat Brown as a member of the adult authority and the youth authority. So he goes through both administrations.

Rowland: Joseph Babich?

Mason: Babich practiced law here. He was a Warren appointee. He handled extraditions and pardons and so on. He stayed pretty well into the second term, when he was appointed to the municipal court in Sacramento.

Rowland: --by Goodwin Knight.

Mason: Yes. He's later been appointed to superior court, and last year or two he was the presiding judge of the Sacramento superior court. He's a competent fellow. I admire him very much because he stands up. He didn't get pushed around by anybody.

Rowland: Was he Republican or Democrat?

Mason: He was a Republican. He had a law office with a Democrat. They featured Democrat-Republican representation. His law partner was Gordon Schaber, who was Dean of McGeorge Law School. He served for a time as a superior court judge.

Richard McKinney was a traveling secretary. He is in the real estate business in San Francisco. Malcom Harris--I think he's still a lobbyist for the liquor interests. Malcom is a thoroughly competent person.

Rowland: What was his role?

Mason: He occupied two or three positions at different times, but was departmental secretary in the later part of Knight's term.

Tom Bright was departmental secretary much of the time. Tom was former chief deputy director of Motor Vehicles. I brought him down to the capitol. He left six months early, after the primary election was over in 1958, to work out his probationary period as division chief in Motor Vehicles.

Tom was assistant director of the Department of Motor Vehicles when former state Senator Robert McCarthy of San Francisco resigned the directorship of the department in a big blow-up in Los Angeles. The senator came to Sacramento to see the Governor apparently to settle their difficulty, but by the time the senator arrived Tom Bright was the director of Motor Vehicles. Tom was a Democrat and served Governor Brown, Sr. through most of his terms.

Tom had been a newsman for many years, representing the news services, and he's a thoroughly competent individual.

Rowland: What about C.P. Martin who is next on our list of Knight's staff?

Mason: Martin worked on publicity. I don't think he was in the office very long.

The last person we called "Sadie," Saveta Perlin. She was a thoroughly competent, satisfactory secretary.

In '58, when four years had passed, Howard Schmidt was executive secretary. Howard was not there very long, and he was appointed a judge in Los Angeles. But he was a good lawyer and handled things well. Sadie had become private secretary and was married about that time.

Mason: Barkdull, I think, was from the Department of Corrections. He was the press secretary during the last six months of Knight's term. He was borrowed and was returned to his old job and is still there. He's back on the same job. I met him a short time ago.

Herwig, who's an old friend of the governor, I don't know particularly what he did.

My job was legislative secretary. We'll discuss that a little later.

Tom Yager was a fellow who had some friends in Los Angeles who were friends of the governor, and they wanted Yager to be a judge. He had to be a judge, according to them, and later he was appointed a judge. I don't know whether he resigned or not. He had problems.

Vern Tobin was the principal pilot of the governor. Hans Morkisch was not secretary, as I remember, there very long. William Gilliss had been deputy director of the Department of Public Works and was in the office the last part of the term for a while. Dave Hunter was another young fellow out of school.

I wanted at some point--and I thought it was desirable at this point--to discuss the legislative attitude of Knight. It's rather characteristic of him, I think, and rather unusual. The governors have little interesting to campaign on, so they usually campaigned on legislative issues. Some candidates for governor, or the executive position, don't even mention anything except legislative propositions, which they have little power to do anything about.

On the other hand, Knight felt that legislative business was for the legislature, primarily. The running of the state government under the law was the business of the governor--overseeing the running of it. He was very strong for appointing competent people and backing them up.

Rowland: So he believed in separation of powers, then.

Mason: Yes. My principal job during the first years I was in the office, or when the governor was in the office, was as the appointment secretary. There are two secretaries called appointment secretaries. One appointment [secretary] whose duty was to make appointments to see the governor, and the other was appointments by the Governor to state office. The appointments to office was my role for the first part of Knight's term.

First of all we had a number of judicial appointments in Los Angeles, where the governor had been judge. He knew lawyers and who he wanted to appoint. No problem, he just appointed them.

Mason: But outside of that, he always looked for somebody who was qualified for the job--not someone who worked in the campaign, but was qualified for the job, and if possible, somebody with experience.

For example, in Department of Agriculture, for years Jacobson had been deputy director. We'd had, I guess, four or five directors who came and went. Some of them were competent, and some I'm not sure about. But whenever there was a vacancy, he stepped in and he ran the department. Under one or two of the directors, I think he ran it anyway. So when there was a vacancy--

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Rowland: Who was this again?

Mason: Jacobson. That was the policy. If somebody was leaving and had done a good job, he was consulted in reference to who he thought was available, who was competent. The issue was "Who was the right person? Not, "Whose appointment would buy the most political support?" The operation was highly unpolitical. Party registration was not a factor.

Rowland: One thing that pops up in any congressional study is the tension that exists between the chief executive and congress. For instance, in the Nixon years, you found a strong executive holding rein over the congress,and when Nixon resigned, congress attempted to seek more power from Gerald Ford. This is a frequent thing that's a theme through U.S. history. Is this theme applicable to the study of California politics? Could you see the California legislature seeking to reassert itself after the Earl Warren years and now that Goodwin Knight was governor?

Mason: There was some such movement, not much. Pat Brown and Jesse Unruh were fighting all the time about power. Jerry Brown and McCarthy are often fighting about power. Knight didn't have any real battles of that kind. There were two or three legislators that he thought he should have support from, but didn't.

Rowland: Randy Collier?

Mason: No, Assemblyman Collier.

Rowland: Oh, John Collier.

Mason: He just didn't seem to feel any responsibility to work with the governor. But Randy Collier, since you mentioned him, he got a little irritated. Randy had a cousin named Collier who had been an assemblyman whom Randy wanted appointed a judge. So the governor listened to Randy and I think listened to him a second time, but did nothing.

Rowland: This is Goodwin Knight you're talking about.

Mason: Yes. And Randy told me that he was not going to see the governor any more. There was no use in doing it. And he was rather cool to the governor.

But one of the greatest number of appointments the governor gets to make is to the local fair boards. In some districts, they're quite sought for, but quite a number of the legislators felt that the appointment of those people for their district was their power and their authority. They didn't want anybody else appointing their members of their board, and Randy Collier was one of these. He let his board "hold over" for years. The general rule of law is that when a term has run the incumbent remains in the office until a successor is appointed. I don't remember what finally happened to it, but that probably irritated Randy a little bit. Randy, I feel, is a very good friend of mine. He was very ambitious.

Rowland: I just want to go back to the subject of staff again, to clear up some questions there. How was power distributed among the staff? Who was considered the most powerful?

Mason: The executive secretary was, to a degree the first, I think, unquestioned first position. In general, the executive secretary exercised that authority.

Rowland: Did staffer's play many roles in the governor's staff? For instance, did one staff member have many different roles that he played, according to the governor's wishes?

Mason: Each member of the staff had a definite field of responsibility but shifts were made and staff members helped each other, particularly as the volume of work shifted from one thing to another. I was legislative secretary but acted as executive secretary following Alderman and I kept my job as director of Motor Vehicles clear throughout Knight's terms. So I was plenty busy. Barrett helped me occasionally on legislative work. But our legislative work wasn't the kind of work that Carter's having done with congress in Washington, by any means, because we didn't, as executive, presume to dictate the policies on every little thing. Knight believed firmly in the separation of powers.

Rowland: What tensions existed among the staff?

Mason: Generally, it wasn't bad, except for Synon. Most of the other staff members were not happy at all with Synon. He was high-handed, arrogant, bossy, conniving, and he couldn't get together

Mason: to do anything. I was active in that proposition. I felt very strongly about it, and quite a number were. But generally, there wasn't much friction. Except in the later stages, when there were a number of us who were quite unhappy with Stearns.

Rowland: Newt Stearns?

Mason: Yes.

Rowland: Why?

Mason: He was supporting Nixon against Knight.

Rowland: In the '58 period, of the switch with Knowland and Knight?

Mason: Yes. He was an active party to it.

Rowland: Tell us more about that.

Mason: Let me give you one point of background. When Knight was making his state of the state speech to the legislature [1957], the word came out and was passed back and forth down the hall that Knowland had announced that he was running for governor.

That started quite an issue of things. Earlier [1954], they developed a battle over who was going to have control of the state Republican committee and the various agencies that were operating. They set up a campaign committee of a hundred persons. Knight ordinarily would've had the power to nominate the committee.

Two things happened. The first one, they tried to sign up the votes. I'll tell you that first. First of all, Arvilla [Knight's first wife] had died a number of months before the election, and he just was re-married at this time. She [Arvilla] was quite an accomplished lady, and I think as good a politician as her husband. Later he decided to marry charming young lady. She's a very nice person. You know her.

Rowland: Virginia.

Mason: Virginia. So they were married, and the Knights went on a honeymoon, a boat trip. He hadn't gotten out of the harbor when a campaign got underway to sign up the members of the state central committee to support Nixon. Nixon was responsible for starting it. He sent his right-hand man, the man who did most of the dirty work for him.

Rowland: Chotiner?

Mason: Yes, Chotiner. They sent out a number of people over the state to quickly sign up the members of the-- Of the central committee, a great many members didn't come. They let the proxy go. It wasn't important to them, in setting up the committee. But Chotiner went out and sent out delegates and representatives all over to sign up the members and get control of the committee.

Well, the word got to Knight very fast, and he terminated his honeymoon cruise. When he came back, he called on his friends and they got busy lining up his other friends and everyone available began to make contacts with the committee members. So Chotiner didn't get his majority vote.

They didn't face the issue in the meeting of the state central committee. They didn't let it go to a vote.

Rowland: You're talking about the election for vice-chairman of the state central committee in '54? The battle between Ahmanson and Arbuthnot in the Republican State Central Committee in '54?

Mason: Yes. The officers generally run the state central committee. The chairmanship alternates between the north and the south with the vice-chairman succeeding the chairman. The fight was over the vice-chairman because he would be chairman the next year during the presidential campaign.

Knowland and Nixon were attempting to get control away from the governor. They did not have the votes, and so they didn't make an issue of it. They backed down without taking a vote.

But they later persuaded Knight to make a deal in 1956. They would divide up the seventy convention delegates almost evenly--all except one, and that would be made up. Knight, Knowland, and Nixon each selected one person to represent the twenty-three members of their respected committees. Nixon would have his representative, Knowland would have his representative and Knight's was to be Newt Stearns.

They all met at the Palace Hotel in San Francisco, in a big room on the southeast corner of the first floor. They secretly decided to represent the Knowland-Nixon group, leaving Knight unrepresented. They kept the press out, they thought. They got to arguing--they had big red velvet curtains in the room. During the meeting somebody found a newsman hidden behind one of the curtains. [laughs] He was a person who was reasonably well known, as I remember.

They had the thing set up. Stearns was later offered a position as Knowland's campaign manager with Whitaker and Baxter in 1958. So Stearns was working with Knowland and Nixon on that side. They

Mason: had control of the committee--Nixon and Knowland. Knight was cut out of it quite completely by the device of having Stearns on the appointed board there representing him--irrevocably. So I felt rather ill about it.

Then after the primary election in 1958 was over, Stearns left Knight and went down and got his job with Whitaker and Baxter in San Francisco.

Let me explain how state political campaigns have been financed. A popular candidate in an oncoming election is approached by a public relations representative who offers to manage the campaign without a salary. The firm will manage the whole affair including the collection of funds, planning the campaign, and paying for the television, newspaper advertising and printing, billboards and other costs.

The public relations firms who are professional promoters will take full charge. No salaries will be paid to the managers by the candidate, but the firm will get commissions on all business placed by the firm at the regular rates charged for such services by businesses or perhaps at special political rates. And since most campaign money is spent on advertising of some kind the compensation of the public relations firms are considerable. If the candidate wins, he doesn't complain.

Rowland: There's one theory on the Knowland-Knight switch: it holds that the Los Angeles Times publisher Norman Chandler and political editor Kyle Palmer--

Mason: Kyle Palmer was the man that was being used to cut off campaign money from Knight. They got Knight away from all his friends, and Newt Stearns was a party to that.

Rowland: He was? How's that?

Mason: Knight needed to have a rest. They gave him a rest, but he didn't need to get it in Arizona or at that time. Those of us who were opposed to that thing didn't go along. They got the operation all organized pretty much with the assistance of Stearns.

Rowland: Have you heard what happened at that meeting? Did Knight ever tell you what happened at that meeting in Arizona?

Mason: Not of any specific meeting between Knight and Chandler or Palmer. The book recently published called The Powers That Be by David Halberstam gives a version of what happened in Arizona.

[Interview II: March 16, 1979]##

Rowland: I would like to start off with a group of questions on Goodie Knight's office again.

Mason: Let me say this. I don't know how well you have this organized in your mind, but I do not have it well organized in mine, as to what we covered, and I may be inclined to repeat. So don't hesitate to lead the conversation.

Rowland: Okay, fine.

Mason: I'll try not to digress too frequently.

Rowland: I just have about two or three questions on Goodwin Knight's staff and the structure of the staff again. I'm wondering how much did Goodie rely on staff for decision making?

Mason: A good deal. I don't think there's anything personal about that. That's just the fact that in the governor's office, as of that time, at least, that so much business came through that one person couldn't even see it all. In the more routine things, some of the staff members carried quite a bit of responsibility.

Rowland: Such as?

Mason: Miss Gallagher.

Rowland: What was her position?

Mason: I suppose, just the governor's secretary. I never heard her classified as having any particular title, but she had been through Warren's term and was a thoroughly competent person and had a grasp of the situation and had the political understanding as well. There was a question in the beginning, who should sign letters from the governor's office. There was a time when a lot of people signed them. Knight tied that down so that the routine correspondence all went through Miss Gallagher's office, and she took care of the signature. She signed them if they were routine or took them to the governor to sign. That was probably applied to everything except legislation, which I handled.

Rowland: Did she make inter-office decisions?

Mason: Coordinating and operating decision of routine, she pretty well controlled them, because there's enough in an office that big to keep a person pretty well occupied just seeing that obvious errors didn't get by.

Rowland: How much did he rely on you for decision making?

Mason: It depended very much on the period. When Warren resigned, I was the office staff above the stenographers for a few days. That dwindled down, and various jobs were shifted to somebody else. Not long after the governor got there, Newton Stearns was given charge of publicity, and I moved from next to the governor's office to next to the front office, out by the reception room. I never had any particular relation to the publicity and the press sections. For a time, I was executive secretary. Then I became legislative secretary. Meanwhile, I was director of Motor Vehicles, so I had plenty to do. I was a very busy person. It could be done only because Motor Vehicles during that period had a very competent staff. It was operated largely through four divisions, and the divison chiefs got together, over a matter of years, and coordinated their activity.

There were periods when the appointment of the director of Motor Vehicles was simply a job for a politician. Fortunately, we didn't have any politicians who didn't know anything about the background who tried to run it. We had that trouble later, but we didn't have it during this period. So it pretty near took care of itself.

Rowland: How often did you meet with Goodie Knight?

Mason: There were no regular organized meetings, in the sense of all going to go into the governor's office and discuss things. We had a daily operation. It followed quite closely during practically the entire period. The governor would get to the office about 9:30 am.

He usually had a schedule. First of all, the governor felt as far as possible, he should talk to all the people who want to talk to the governor, and he spent a lot of time doing that.

Rowland: This is individual meetings?

Mason: Individual interviews. The governor got a lot of useful information, but I felt it also wasted a lot of the governor's time. But it's pretty hard to say to one person, "You can come in and talk to the governor," but to say to another,"You can't, because I don't think you're smart enough," or whatever would be the criteria.

But the governor came in, and he often went out to lunch. He used to go home for lunch quite often, or he would go out to lunch with staff people who came in for a rather long period of time. Every Monday or Tuesday for a long period they went out and had a luncheon meeting with the legislators, the assembly, principally, usually including the Speaker.

Rowland: Knight was close to assembly leaders?

Mason: Yes.

Rowland: Luther Lincoln?

Mason: Yes. Lincoln, particularly, was a very close supporter and I think a thoroughly competent person and close friend. The governor used to rely on him quite a good deal. Two or three of the staff would usually go along.

We'd go out to restaurant, usually over on "J" Street that wasn't too busy, and he'd take different legislators down--didn't let the group get more than about ten, fifteen. We'd take different legislators, partly at least, depending on what particular subjects were up and whether the members were particularly interested in them. That was a regular operation, I think an important part of the contact.

Then about 5:30 pm (the outer door was closed around 5:00)--by 5:30 the governor would have most of his people out, and then we'd go into the office--one at a time, or in groups--and the business of the office was conducted at that time of the day.

Rowland: This is the inner staff, that list we went through--people like Newton Stearns and Doug Barrett and Babick, Bright, Harris and others.

Mason: Others as they had problems at that time. I was in there very regularly during the legislative period.

Rowland: Would you consider yourself a close confidant of Goodwin Knight?

Mason: Mrs. Knight says I was his closest friend. I felt very close, and I think he felt the same toward me. The governor didn't seem to have any fields or activities that I was barred from. In other words, I was taken in on all the problems.

Then we'd work there. The letters that had been written in different sections came in for the governor's signature. He used to sign the letters and talk things over with the staff or tell jokes. He kept everything active and interesting.

By about 6:00 or 6:30, the office would be empty. Anybody of the staff who felt they needed to see the governor got in some time there, and when there were no more staff members, why the governor left. But he stayed until things were disposed of, usually.

During the campaigns, and also to an extent between, the governor made a lot of speaking engagements over the state in the evenings. On those occasions, he was supposed to get out of the

Mason: office at 5:30. He'd get on the plane. They had an old National Guard plane that rattled and shook. It was--oh!--a terrible thing the governor used to ride. He'd get out of the office by 6:00--

Rowland: Called the "Grizzly?"

Mason: Yes. He'd get out of here at 6:00, perhaps, and get down and make a speech in Los Angeles and come back the same night. He'd get back about twelve or one. One reason he could do that, he had a capacity to go to sleep any time he was ready to. So he'd get on the plane and he would be asleep before it got off the ground. He'd wake up when he got to the other end of the flight thoroughly refreshed. And he'd also sleep coming back. So he saved two hours of time by sleeping on the plane. [laughter] Besides, when he was asleep he probably couldn't hear the rattling and the noise of the plane.

But that was basically over the whole period--the office staff meetings and groups and so on. He'd call in two or three or four sometimes if he wanted to, but generally--

Rowland: Were you at almost all of these meetings?

Mason: No, I wouldn't say I was. I was to quite a considerable number of them. If somebody was talking about the article they were going to write, perhaps some piece for the campaign, I wasn't necessarily in there because I had little part in that part of the activity. If it was a legislative program or--well, for a year and a half or so after the governor came in, I handled the governor's appointments to office. It was not generally too difficult.

First of all, Knight didn't replace Warren's appointees. He felt that,in a sense, it wasn't his administration, that the people had been appointed, most of them were thoroughly competent, and the thing went right along. Warren had been there for a long time, and so most of his staff were experienced people. So the governor took those, and we had not many new ones.

There were periods, like in the early part of the term, when there were possible executions or--oh, there's the extraditions. Joe Babich was in. He was the office lawyer. He and I and the governor were the only lawyers that were on the regular staff.

Rowland: Why was there such a rapid turnover of staff under Goodwin Knight?

Mason: Well, I still say that I think the turnover was quite low. There were a few promotions. What's-his-name was in there and was put in charge of the liquor enforcement.

Rowland: Malcom Harris?

Mason: Yes. But the turnover was rather slow at one period.

Rowland: The incident with Synon is very peculiar. I can't understand why Goodwin Knight would hire a person like Synon, who he obviously had problems with prior--

Mason: I could never understand it, really. Finally, I found out. In fact, I asked the governor specifically why he appointed Synon. He told me that,and from his point of view, I could understand it very well.

Rowland: Why was it?

Mason: Clint Mosher asked him to.

Rowland: Oh, right.

Mason: And Clint Mosher seemed to speak pretty much for the Hearst papers.

Rowland: So that speaks about the power of the Hearst press on Goodwin Knight and the Republican party.

Mason; Yes. Digressing now, through the twenties and thirties, there was a regular routine in the politics of California. There were several large, well-known, powerful newspapers, all of which were Republican. The editors or owners used to get together along toward election time and decide on their candidate for governor, lieutenant governor, and to some extent, the other elective offices. Then they went out and elected them. What tends to be true is that it was their administration.

Rowland: Did the Hearst press urge Knight to appoint anyone else to his inner staff?

Mason: Not that I know of. I don't know of anyone else. Except, of course, he appointed Mrs. Hearst to the Board of Regents of the University of California.

Rowland: You mentioned Tom Yager; southern California newspapers asked that he be appointed.

Mason: Yes. I don't know who, particularly, even was sponsoring Yager. He was there only a short time at the close of the administration. He had sponsors. He was appointed by the governor.

The falling apart of the Republican newspapers took place before, really, the falling apart of the Republican party administration in California. Prominent among the editors--more prominent than the size of the paper might lead a person to expect--was the Oakland Tribune.

Rowland: The Knowland paper.

Mason: Knowland, senior (Joe; son Bill was not so competent) was a very effective politician. Joe Knowland had been in Congress, and he had been a power in the party for years before that. He made Earl Warren district attorney of Alameda County and then attorney general, then governor. So there's no question why Bill Knowland was appointed to the U.S. Senate at the first opportunity.

Rowland: Who else in Goodie Knight's personal relationships were press people--Jack Welter, for instance?

Mason: Welter was not looked upon with any great favor. He was a very independent person. He wrote things up in a controversial manner--at least for the governor and the administration. Personally, I got along well with him, and I think the staff generally did individually, but he wasn't cooperative with the administration.

Rowland: Through our research, it's been indicated that Knight held very long midnight staff sessions, similar to what Jerry Brown holds now, and people would all sit around and--

Mason: That wasn't characteristic of the whole term, but it was very characteristic of the early period. When Knight came in--his wife had recently died. He was a very sociable sort of person. With his wife gone he was alone. We used to leave the office just a little before 12:00 [am] and go over to a restaurant on "K" Street and have milk toast, a number of nights a week. So there was a period when he first came in that conversations did go on far into the night. But later, after he was married, he was out campaigning or he was home with Virginia, most of the nights.

Rowland: So he needed the camaraderie of the staff to--

Mason: Well, it seemed to be that way. I used to go over--he was living in the Senator Hotel for a time--I'd go over to the Senator Hotel about 9:00 am and have breakfast with him.

Rowland: And then you'd meet in his room, or would you go back over to the governor's office?

Mason: Most of the discussions took place in the governor's office. It was a big, beautiful office. You've probably never seen it as it was then.

Rowland: That's in the section they're restoring now?

Mason: No, it's in the new section. In Reagan's administration, the governor invited the Constitution Revision Commission to come into his office and greet him, and I was on the commission and went in. Joe Babich was another one in there, and we said, "Look at this place. This looks like it was set up for a Mexican barbecue." I had never seen an office which I thought was more--appropriately, and not fancy, but well arranged and decorated than the governor's office. It had a great big table there, and the whole group around it, and it was beautiful.

But what had happened, the paneling was taken off or covered up: the old furniture was all gone. There were big, high, rough Mexican style tables of oak planks and iron, painted black, and big chairs with cowhide seats. It had been changed over completely.

So the governor's office in those days was an ideal spot that we'd use. If you had a problem with somebody else, you discuss it in the far corner of the office without disturbing the governor, and when you got things settled, why you'd go and take it up with him. That was the real active headquarters. Most of the governor's activity was in his own office in the Capitol.

Rowland: Besides yourself, who else was particularly close to Goodie Knight as a staff member?

Mason: Well, everybody. Everybody seemed to be very happy with the governor. He was a nice boss to work for.

Rowland: What about Doug Barrett, for instance?

Mason: Doug Barrett was very close to the governor. Bob Alderman we should mention here. Bob had been an old friend of the governor. I think he was responsible for getting him elected. They had been friends for quite a length of time. Bob had been in the chamber of commerce, over in Woodland. Earlier, he'd directed the chamber at Clear Lake. Bob was close. Then there was a falling out, which was very unfortunate.

Rowland: Yes, you told me that.

Mason: But when Knight came back and was counting on running again in 1962, after he was defeated [in 1958], he asked Bob to come in and handle his campaign. So they got together. I think the governor would have made a very good showing. You can never predict who's going to be elected, but he [Knight] did have hepatitis, and he was in pretty bad shape for three or four months.

Joe Babich was friendly and popular. Newt Stearns was pretty close to the governor most of that time. He had the office adjoining the governor's office, and he was the only person who had such ready and convenient access to his office. He was the kind of person who was glad to take responsibility.

Rowland: Stearns.

Mason: Stearns. His activities tended to keep others from getting too close to the governor.

Rowland: Did Goodwin Knight take ideas directly from the staff, or did he have his own ideas in mind and hope that the staff would clarify it? I'm wondering how that relationship worked, because you could either see Goodwin Knight as a weak governor, someone who was totally dependent on his staff, or a strong governor who used his staff as a kind of a clarifying--

Mason: He used the staff, and the staff was cooperative, but on most of the business of the state he relied on the departments, or the legislature. So the governor's office staff generally wasn't where the big ideas were worked up.

Rowland: This is getting back to his definition of a laissez-faire relationship with the legislature?

Mason: Yes. He took a hand when he felt it was necessary, but his theory was that we have three departments of government. There's executive and the legislative, and they're separate.

There are some governors, of course--including some in this state, who want to be the whole thing, tries to be, but it can't very well be done.

IV THE CALIFORNIA WATER PLAN: LEGISLATIVE BICKERING TO EXECUTIVE ACTION

From A.D. Edmonston to Harvey Banks

Rowland: I have quite a few questions on the California Water Plan, and maybe we could slowly untie that Gordian knot.

Mason: Well, I don't know how much I can contribute to settling the facts about it. I should know something about it.

Rowland: I think the greatest source for me for understanding the water plan in the Knight years is this article by Harvey Grody.

Mason: I felt he covered it pretty well--remarkably well for a person who wasn't right in it.

Rowland: In the Grody article, he talked about the problems that Knight had with the chief engineer, A.D. Edmonston. What exactly were the conflicts between Goodwin Knight and engineer Edmonston?

Mason: I wasn't aware that there was anything that would justify the amount of comment there is here. Edmonston was an old-timer there, a professional engineer, and by that I mean a person who doesn't believe anybody except an engineer knows anything about engineering. I think he was an effective engineer. But he felt he knew the answers and expected people to accept his interpretation.

Banks came in--

Rowland: Harvey Banks.

Mason: Harvey Banks--reasonably early, and during most of the period, he was the center of the water development program.

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Mason: One of the directors was on the plane flying east, and Harvey Banks was present, and this director came in [to the governor's office] and reported that Harvey Banks had said some very disparaging things about the water plan. The governor called Harvey in, and I was there, and he said some quite unpleasant things to Harvey and told him that he didn't want him running down the program. Harvey said that he understood the governor's position. He would be very careful not to say anything derogatory to the program, and he didn't, but I think the governor missed some good advice.

Rowland: Do you remember where Edmonston got his greatest support as the chief engineer? Did he have a close relationship with the Central Valley farmers, for instance?

Mason: I can't tell you. The Farm Bureau in California has been one of the strongest political organizations for a long time, and they are the group that are most interested in water. Maybe that isn't true. It might be the Los Angeles Water District [Metropolitan Water District] is the most influential. And they were very influential during the entire period.

We had a statement that was frequently made during this period, "California has plenty of water, but it doesn't come in the right place, or at the right season." So the purpose of the water organization and of the state was to make the water available to the people who needed it when they needed it. I have a very strong feeling that California, even northern California, is short of water. There's a large amount of land in the north that could be highly productive if it had water. But the statement was used to justify taking the water south, and they had more votes down there, and they took the water.

Rowland: I think what's kind of interesting here is that in Grody's article he talks about the problems of Goodwin Knight unable to show a sufficient leadership during his years in the California Water Plan program, and the problems that resulted there. For instance, the major problem with setting up the single water agency, which finally came about, I guess, in the 1956 session. Why was Knight silent for so long on the legislative bickering that occurred over a single water agency?

Mason: I didn't think he was. I thought he took a reasonably active interest in it. There were a number of things that may throw a little light on it. One was that Edmund G. Brown, the attorney general at that time, was quite insistent that his office should have charge of the legal matters relating to water.

Mason: Of course, in drawing a plan, the law makes a lot of importance in different situations and different places. So whoever was going to be the attorney is going to make interpretations and rulings and plans and so on. So it is important. But Brown insisted that it should be his, and he said to the governor, "Now look. I'm your attorney. The constitution makes me your attorney, and this is an important phase of the state business, and I should have control of the legal work on the state water plan."

Knight, I think, accepted that as true.

Rowland: What compromises were made?

Mason: I don't know any particular compromises on that, but I know a couple of things that happened. Here was one: Brown said, "I'll keep you entirely posted on it. I'll work with you, and I'll take no important steps without consultation. I am your attorney. You are my client, and the client has [laughs] important rights," see. And he said, "I'll keep you advised. I'll make a regular report on it."

Knight said no, he didn't think a special report was needed, but he would like to keep me posted. So one morning every week, Brown's deputy in charge of water activities appeared in my office and told me what had happened since the last week, what the trends were, what was happening, what they were doing. They kept that up over the whole period of development of the water plan. I reported developments to the governor.

Rowland: So you had a close consultation then, with Brown's office, regarding this single water agency.

Mason: Yes. I was a contact point on that matter.

Rowland: Did you yourself make decisions?

Mason: I made no decisions of any importance. There were always others better qualified than me.

Rowland: On this particular thing?

Mason: Yes.

The Governor Calls a Special Session

Rowland: Why did Goodie Knight finally call a special session in 1956 on the single water agency problem?

Mason: He apparently felt that something needed to be done at that time. Things were sort of drifting. There were so many things going on. It's hard to tell when something gets to the point that it needs attention, but there was a lot of activity, and I can't tell you just how and when they influenced it, but the Metropolitan Water District in Los Angeles was very concerned and active in it. And of course, the principal process, the need for a big organization, was to get the water to southern California. That's what it was really about.

Rowland: It wasn't for irrigation, then in the Central Valley, for the west side Valley farmers?

Mason: The Central Valley is very large. There were many irrigation districts. The points that may not have been covered could be covered by irrigation districts or by cooperative effort to erect the big dams in the north, at Redding and Oroville.

Rowland: Wasn't the project sold as an irrigation project during the early years, and then later sold as an urban and industrial--

Mason: It was sold pretty well to northern California as an irrigation project. There was always a voice from the Bay Area against the Contra Costa Canal and the canal into the North Bay--later, the dam opposite Gilroy [San Luis Reservoir] was a part of the storage.

I had a strong feeling--it's digression, but--I hesitate to say certain things are facts when I don't think they're provable--but I have been very much opposed to the Delta Canal, the Cross-Delta [peripheral canal] Canal bypass because I think if that ever gets built it'll block forever the cleaning up of the water situation in the Delta.

There's an area down in the San Joaquin Valley where there's too much boron. The water has an effect of poisoning a lot of the crops. It makes the land unproductive, and that's the situation that needs to be cleared up. It won't be if all of the large amounts of water that are in sight are already committed to the south. This is simply an easy way to get more water, but it means, I think, that the situation in the Delta will never be cleaned up.

There is a problem that I think has not been taken care of, questions raised about the possibility of making a dam lower, at Vallejo or even across Marin County, where the bridge is now, and

Mason: there were plans and discussions about damming the water there and saving much large amounts of water. If they can do that, they can dam it and control it, and they can flush out the Bay in very wet winters. Then they will keep out the salt water as it's brought in by tides. There was a plan to build a dam across the Bay just about where the San Rafael bridge is.

Rowland: Where the Antioch Bridge is now?

Mason: The bridge that goes across to Richmond from San Rafael.

Rowland: Oh, yes.

Mason: However, somebody came in with a plan that--that was going to make a fill, with some smaller bridges, and somebody came in with a plan to build a steel bridge across, and Warren immediately got busy--got a bill through and signed it immediately and made a contract to have a certain company build a steel bridge there. There was a lot of whispering about it. I think there are some things that should not be discussed and this is one of them.

Rowland: Getting back to the creation of a single water agency, that seems to define some of what we were talking about earlier--Goodwin Knight's relationship with the legislature, this kind of laissez-faire relationship. Grody in that article talks about Knight wanting a "straight-line" agency, directly responsible to him and a head administrator who would be appointed by Knight himself, rather than the board and commissioner relationship.

Mason: I don't know anything on that beyond the two things that I would expect would be concerned. One is, you get a lot faster action and more real action if you put the principal responsibility on one person. It seemed to be an administrative situation, rather than a legislative one. You didn't need a lot of counsel, a lot of advice. You needed good engineers, and a person who would be very active in controlling and forcing the movement. We've had a number of boards like--this is not a valid argument at this point--what are we doing with our present electric plants?

I understand there's a movement now to abolish the commission that was set to promote--

Rowland: The energy commission run by the state?

Mason: Yes. The paper this morning says the man who authored it is promoting a bill to repeal it.

Rowland: Alquist, yes. [laughs] Alquist sponsored it, and now he's against it.

Mason: You can understand those things when you see what's happened. It did what he didn't want done, instead of what he wanted done. Now he's against it.

That's like people get all upset and put in a regulation of some activity, and the first thing that happens, that the organization or the people that are to be regulated get control of the regulatory organization, and it's a cover for them, a shield. That is not necessarily true of all of them, just--

Rowland: Who were the major sponsors of the governor's bills and legislation in the legislature? For instance, let's take the assembly first. Weinberger?

Mason: Weinberger probably first of all, and active not only in this, but in the liquor. He was a chief sponsor. Those bills were his. [laughs] He took a very--

Rowland: Did you work with Weinberger as a representative of the administration? I'm curious about your role.

Mason: Not much. Weinberger came in with his bill, and he didn't want to take anybody's advice, including the governor's. The governor talked to him a number of times, and--

Rowland: We're talking about the bill to create the single water agency?

Mason; No, no. At this point, I'm talking about the liquor bill. Knight quite insisted on it, and Cap [Weinberger] got really quite huffy about it. [laughs] That happens in politics of this kind, of course. Somebody introduces a bill. If it looks like it's a popular bill, the executive says, "I'm for it! That's my bill!"

Rowland: I'd like for you to give us more of your observations of Caspar Weinberger because he certainly played a major role in this administration and later on, I think, in the Reagan and Nixon administrations.

Mason: He did, all right. Cap was from San Francisco. He had a brother somewhere near his age, and they practiced law with their father. Weinberger, of course, is a Jewish name. They were Protestant. I've forgotten what church they belonged to, but they were quite active in that and were a popular group in San Francisco. Cap was quite young when he first was elected here and began, during his very first term, to make his position felt. He was very effective. So then he lived up here [Sacramento]. He had two daughters--and one of my daughters used to babysit for them.

Cap took an important hand. I remember talking with secretary of the state federation of labor one time, Cornelius Haggerty. I said of Cap, "He's a pretty determined person."

Mason: He said, "He's an awfully good person. We're sorry that he's not on our side." [laughter] In other words, he was effective enough that they really would like to have had him working for them. But he was quite conservative.

Rowland: What was Weinberger's relationship with the Speaker, James Silliman?

Mason: I don't know there's any personal or special relationship there.

Rowland: We had a counter theory on the relationship there between Silliman and Weinberger, regarding the liquor control controversy, in that Silliman ran the Weinberger committee and told Weinberger what points to emphasize and what recommendations to make to the senate.

Mason: Well, Silliman was an aggressive person, and pretty effective, but I can't imagine him telling Weinberger anything about his bills.

Rowland: Did Weinberger's recommendations make it through the senate without any amendments, do you remember?

Mason: No, there were amendments. My recollection is there were a number of amendments, maybe one or two of them of some importance.

Rowland: Did the liquor control controversy and the senate recommendations cause friction between the two houses? In other words, why did the senate amend the Weinberger amendments? I think there's only one that came out, and that was for the final creation of the referendum in '54 campaign--Proposition 3.

Mason: I don't know. Weinberger would have been looked upon as somewhat of an upstart in the senate because of his youth.

Rowland: Rather brash?

Mason: Perhaps. He was a young fellow and doing important things. They do tend to feel, even here in California, a special sense of importance in the senate.

Rowland: Was there more accessibility of liquor advocates to the senate?

Mason: I can't give you any details on this, but it's no question that one person outside of the legislature had a great deal of influence, whether it was intentional or not. He was, of course, named Samish. [laughter] Samish pretty well ran it in those days. I suppose you'll want to talk about Samish later.

Rowland: Yes, I really would. He's quite a character. Certainly his name comes up--

Mason: He was effective.

Rowland: What about Harry Parkman, for instance? What relationship did Knight or yourself have with certain major, powerful senators like Harry Parkman?

Mason: Parkman was an old-timer, knew his way around, and during a number of administrations he was rather active. He was chairman--I believe as your record points out--of the important committee, governmental efficiency, for a time. George Hatfield was the man in the senate over this period who exercised the most influence, clearly.

Ralph Swing, within the field in which he was interested, was pretty well boss. I disagree completely with a statement I saw somewhere in these papers indicating that Swing was in any way controlled by Samish. I thought then, and I think now, it was the other way.

Samish was very careful to get along with Swing and give Swing what he wanted. Swing had a couple of representatives of his own, handling operations.

Well, maybe here's as good a place as any. Bills in the senate were referred to the committees, generally, on the basis of the codes they amended. I revised the rules of the senate and the government rules between '39 and '41 and introduced that plan of reference of bills. The presiding officer makes the reference and exercises some discretion about the assignment of bills. With the exception, probably, of finance, which dealt with appropriations, generally. Bills were referred to the committees which dealt with their subject. We had health and safety committee--the bills that amended the health and safety code went to the health and safety committee. Bills that amended the agricultural code went to the agriculture committee, education code--education committee, and so on, which was, I still think, a pretty good system--they've changed it rather recently. It was a pretty effective thing, if what you were trying to do is to get bills on a subject in the same committee.

But back at that time, Swing went into the committee on rules and asked that bills relating to gambling and liquor be referred to governmental efficiency, of which he was chairman. I noticed some comments in the papers about how the governmental efficiency committee operated.

Rowland: Yes. Well, that's certainly a catch-all term, governmental efficiency.

Mason: It is a broad name. The man who was responsible for setting up the committee was a former assemblyman, way back in the nineties, or thereabout, from Napa. His name was Coombs and he was the father

Mason: of Sinclair Nathan Coombs. The father had been in congress and had been ambassador to Japan. The son was a senator quite a number of years later.

But he said what we needed was a committee on governmental efficiency and economy--economy being a great idea among a group of senators at that time. That's really a digression, but that's where the committee came from. But it didn't take on any special significance until Swing became chairman. Then it was a very important committee.

Rowland: Getting back to the California Water Plan, who in the senate did the governor and yourself work with closely on water legislation?

Mason: The contacts with the senate were never nearly as close as they were with the assembly.

Rowland: Why?

Mason: I don't know, but I can tell you how it worked. Burns was President pro tempore during most of that period. Burns was a Democrat, but he was said to vote Republican. He was very non-partisan. He was conservative. The Burns control group consisted of Burns and Republicans, and one or two other Democrats. It was in fact a Republican committee, although Burns always said he was a Democrat and took a position and sometimes referred even to a Democratic committee, but the group of which he was the head when he was the president pro tem was made up principally of Republicans.

When the governor had anything he wanted to discuss with the senate, he'd say to me, "Let's have a conference. Get Burns and whoever he wants. I'd like to discuss that with them." So I'd hike up to Burns' office and say, "The governor would like to have a conference with you and whoever else you want to bring from the senate." Sometimes he'd say what particular subject you were discussing, so he'd get people who were interested in this, if there were some of them particularly interested.

Burns would say, "When do you want to meet with us?"

And I would say, "Right now, perhaps." They would immediately go down to the governor's office. In that sense of talking together and discussing things with him, they were completely cooperative. I never saw anything that looked like--well, about as free from partisan politics as it could be. Knight never was particularly partisan. He often supported Democratic proposals and he usually voted Republican, but there were very few partisan bills. Burns was a Democrat. [laughs]

Mason: The members of the senate went back to the time before the end of cross-filing. It was Governor Brown who broke down the non-partisan cross-filing system.

Rowland: Was it Burns' leadership of the un-American activities committee which bothered Goodie Knight?

Mason: I don't think so. They felt the same about the oath and all those things. No, I'm sure there was no irritation from that.

Rowland: It's been rumored that Burns used that committee as a way to embarrass other legislators.

Mason: If he did, I didn't see it.

Rowland: I was wondering if that would also have spilled over to the governor's office.

Mason: But I think the governor agreed completely with the positions that Burns took. Have you ever seen a copy of the un-American activities report?

Rowland: [laughs] I did my thesis on the un-American activities committee. I read them all, inside and out.

Mason: Well, you're quite aware of what happened on those reports?

Rowland: Yes.

Mason: Two weeks after they were published, you couldn't find one in Sacramento.

Rowland: That's true.

Mason: I had a set, but I was looking for them the other day--I can't find them.

Rowland: God! A complete set? All fifteen reports?

Maosn: No, the principal ones. The early ones. Some of the later ones, I didn't get.

Rowland: The real hard-to-get ones, from '43 and '45.

Mason: But those early ones that were--some others, two or three--

Rowland: That was in the [Senator Jack B.] Tenney era.

Mason: Tenney period, and then Burns.

Rowland: Getting back to Burns, then, was it just the fact that Burns held such power over the senate that Goodie felt he couldn't have a good working relationship with--

Mason: No, I think there was a good working relationship--

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Mason: --between the governor and the senate, as such. Certainly the Burns group worked with him, including Parkman, McBride, worked closely together.

Rowland: What about J. Howard Williams?

Mason: He was quite close.

Rowland: Was he leading supporter of Knight's water plan?

Mason: He was very active on the water issue. The last year or two, Howard was very ill with cancer, and he died before this thing was really settled. But he probably represented the irrigation districts most concerned about the water problems, and he was a highly respected and competent legislator.

Rowland: So on the assembly side, it was principally Weinberger, but what about Pauline Davis? Did she also play a--

Mason: I don't think she was ever in the governor's office, and I don't remember any communication with her or from her. She stood on her own, very much. The male assemblymen didn't "tangle" with her.

Rowland: There was that male-female friction in the assembly.

Mason: Well, they made a special rest room for her. [laughter]

Rowland: I guess they'd have to. Getting back to your role here, how closely did you work with Weinberger and other legislators--getting back to the single-agency bill? Did you meet once a week with Weinberger and Howard Williams, for instance?

Mason: No, most of those things were done by the governor directly with the legislators that were interested. Howard Williams was, I imagine, consulted on every important decision as to the water legislation.

Rowland: So you acted, then, as a conduit of the governor's--

Mason: Mostly. My greatest activity in those things was, when the governor said, "I'd like to talk to Senator--" somebody, or "Assemblyman--," I'd get him to come in and talk to him.

Mason: But those two bills weren't handled as governor's office bills. They were in a sense administration bills. The governor was backing them strongly, but they had their personal authors, who felt very strongly about their personal importance, and the governor didn't attempt to say, "Now I'd like the bill," to this one, that one, and the other. But if there was some particular thing, he said, "Here's one thing. I wish you could do this," or, "I'd appreciate it."

Rowland: Getting back to the special session he called in '56, who in the office encouraged Goodwin Knight to call for that special session, or was that his decision?

Mason: I think it was his decision. If it weren't his decision--in a sense, I'm sure it was his decision, but what may have influenced him strongly in the matter was water interest in the south.

Rowland: In the southland?

Mason: Yes. Because the water development was primarily for dry southern California.

Rowland: What was Knight's relationship with the Metropolitan Water District?

Mason: Well, he talked to them when they wanted to talk to him, I think was about it. He was concerned about the actual need for water, and as a politician, he would have to be concerned as to the public reaction in the south. On the water issue Knight had the southern California point of view.

Rowland: Was there any coincidence that '56 was also the presidential convention year, and that Goodwin Knight's name was thrown up as a presidential candidate?

Mason: I don't know of anything that would tie them together, particularly. Of course, during those periods, anything could be influential.

Rowland: What was Knight's relationship with Senator Richards, from Los Angeles?

Mason: Richards was pretty much "that kid" to the governor. He was quite a number of years younger than he is now, you know.

Rowland: Yes. I've seen those old pictures of him, and he looked like me. [laughs] Younger than me.

Mason: He was rather active, and he was not a bad senator. But I don't remember him as influencing particular legislation, on any subject, or being really interested in anything except his own local bills. Handling the Los Angeles legislation was a full-time job for a good senator.

Rowland: What was Knight's position in the north-south battle, particularly in the senate, over water rights in the constitutional amendment?

Mason: He was from the south, and I think it showed. In other words, he had a rather southern California viewpoint. According to the statement that was popular at that time, there was plenty of water for all of California, but it was in the wrong place. So there wasn't basically an issue--I don't remember any discussion of taking away water that was needed in northern California. There is some provision in the statute about the place of the origin of the water. You're not supposed to take water out of watershed so long as there's need for water in the watershed, and it was sort of inferred, at least--I don't know that it's more than an inference, but there was a political inference that if they'd run short of water, they'd recapture the water that had been taken south. That was not in my judgement a sound position because the north could never take water that the south had got their hands on. There's two votes down there to one up here.

Rowland: Going to the retirement of A.D. Edmonston and the selection of Harvey Banks to become the first director of the water resources department, why was Harvey Banks selected, and how was Harvey Banks chosen to be head of that department?

Mason: I think there was a consensus that Banks was the best man for the job.

Rowland: Did you suggest Harvey Banks?

Mason: I didn't. I didn't know him when he was appointed. I knew he came in with strong recommendations, and there seemed to be no opposition.

Rowland: Recommendations from whom?

Mason: The various water groups.

Rowland: Did Goodwin Knight influence or convince Edmonston to finally resign in '57?

Mason: I don't know what happened there. My impression at the time was that Edmonston just got tired of the wrangling and retired.

Rowland: He retired?

Mason: In other words, he would have a very good retirement.

Rowland: Did his retirement break the stalemate over the reorganization of the water resources--

Mason: I don't remember any stalemate, actually, existing over the reorganization. There was a hot argument, though.

Rowland: There was a problem with the State Water Resources Board. Knight wanted a straight-line agency with a Department of Water Resources. So you don't think that Edmonston was very influential in that area?

Negotiating with the Federal Government: The San Luis Dam and the 160-Acre Limitation

Mason: I don't think so. He had been earlier. The members of the water resources board used to go over in his [Edmonston's] office and discuss things with him.

Rowland: Knight was for having the federal government, the Bureau of Reclamation, build the San Luis Reservoir as a joint project with the Feather River Project, if it ever was constructed. Did he give any thought to the possibility that the 160-acre limitation might apply?

Mason: Everybody was talking about the 160-acre limitation, but I couldn't see that it influenced anybody. I once discussed that with Gordon Garland, the former Speaker, who was a farmer down on the east side of the irrigated area down in the San Joaquin Valley, and he said, "As a matter of fact, the 160-acre limitation doesn't really mean anything, and here's why: In my case, for example, I can have water for a hundred-sixty acres. My wife can have water for a hundred-sixty acres. My five daughters can each have water for a hundred-sixty acres. Their husbands can each have water for a hundred-sixty acres. Now, this applies to each irrigation district, and there's about six down there." So he figured it out, 19,000 acres or something about what is what his family could have water for under the 160-acre limitation. He says, "It's not feasible. It's impractical, isn't enforced, the very nature of things, it probably never will be, and it's a matter of no real consequence."

Rowland: So there wasn't a concern that if the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation got involved that they would enforce it.

Mason: There was talk about it. There were people who got very excited for fear that they would lose something.

Rowland: What groups do you recall were--?

Mason: I think individual farmers. There were several large farming interests who would be deeply concerned. I don't remember any drive, or anything of that kind, but there was talk in the papers.

Mason: When somebody wanted something to write about, as when a newsman didn't have any stories for that day, why he'd write about the 160-acre limitation.

But Mr. Garland, who was a very successful farmer--said the 160-acre limitation really wasn't a matter of consequence.

Rowland: Referring back to that Grody article, Grody says that Knight played a leadership role again in 1956 in seeking federal cooperation. Why did Goodie again play a leadership role, particularly in that period?

Mason: First of all, I don't know that he didn't carry the same role from the so-called "first period of interest" to the second point of interest.

Rowland: So you don't see any gap there? You disagree with--

Mason: I don't see any sharp lines there. I don't see when he quit having an interest or when he picked it up again. I think it was the same interest--a different degree of activity, probably, depending on the particular issues that were before the legislature.

Rowland: Why did he seek federal cooperation for the San Luis project?

Mason: I think it was because there were problems about getting the state money, or some people thought there were. It seemed to be an easy way out, for the money.

Rowland: To get the federal government to do part of the project--

Mason: Yes, to put up the money.

Rowland: Put up the money, and then have the state complete--I think there's now two reservoirs there--the government would start the upper reservoir, and the state would complete the lower reservoir, and have a loan from the government to finance the project.

Mason: Yes.

Rowland: Did you have any influence there in working on the San Luis Reservoir project with the federal government?

Mason: I'd say no, I didn't.

Rowland: You didn't play any role there. Any other staff members who might have worked closely with Knight on--

Mason: I don't think the governor's personal staff was really actively working on it. It would be in the water department that the work would have been done.

Rowland: So he maintained, then, a close relationship with Harvey Banks on the issue.

Mason: Yes.

Rowland: And through you, perhaps, maintained a relationship with key legislators?

Mason: Yes.

Rowland: Was there any thought of Hugh Burns? Because Hugh Burns later became a very powerful force in the Brown years on the California Water Plan, the Burns-Porter water act.

Mason: He was active on it. In fact, he was quite concerned, coming from an irrigated district. He was not happy with the plan to deliver the water to the south. Once on the senate floor he said of water interests in the south, "Let them bring their own pails and come up and get their own water."

Rowland: He represented an irrigation district on both the east side of the valley, which had plenty of water [laughs]--Fresno County is pretty big.

Mason: Yes. They're two or three very fortunate irrigation districts down there. [laughs] There's one down there, and the Modesto irrigation district. It was a profitable investment, entirely aside from the water it produced. I've forgotten--I saw not long ago, the farmers there are getting their water free, plus quite a bit of cash.

Rowland: That's from the federal government, as a subsidy?

Mason: No, that was from the profit from water and electricity from their water districts.

Rowland: That's interesting. So although Burns was involved in the legislative aspect, Knight was not seeking Burns's support for anything, because Burns was--

Mason: No.

Rowland: Why did he not seek his support?

Mason: I suppose he didn't need it. In politics, you don't ask for anything unnecessarily, because you work out what you might call a capital investment that you have in knowing people and having done favors for them. A politician uses up his influence as little as he can because it's limited. You can only get so much from people. Governor Brown Jr. may be getting to that point--he's coming to a point of limits.

Rowland: I think we're going to have a repeat of the Economy Bloc in the legislature.

Mason: It could well be.

Rowland: [laughs] With Leo McCarthy playing Gordon Garland's role. It's going to be interesting.

V LIQUOR LOBBY, LIQUOR CONTROL AND THE BOARD OF EQUALIZATION

The Story of William Bonelli

Rowland: Why don't we turn to another topic, and that's the liquor control controversy, which is an interesting affair, in 1954. I wonder if you could tell us about William Bonelli?

Mason: I could tell you something about William Bonelli. I happened to be in need of a job in December of 1933, and I went down and saw Senator Inman, who was a close friend of mine. I said, "They're putting some people on the Board of Equalization. I'd like to go on." He wrote a note, or he called up, I think, Fred Stuart and said, "My friend Paul is here, and I wish you'd put him on." He received an affirmative answer.

So I went over and started to work. They put me on the payroll as an auditor--I suppose because the Board of Equalization did a lot of accounting. We went in--it was in the senate chamber with a group of other people, looking over the applications for liquor licenses. I was there for a week or two, and then I was given a particular assignment. In order to get a license under the provision, the applicant made the application. A questionnaire was sent out to the cities, the counties, and anybody else that was interested for their reaction as to the issuance of the license. They also had some employee make an investigation. They divided the state up into districts--one at Marysville and one at Redding or somewhere there--north. If an application came through, and everybody who was concerned recommended it, I'd turn the license over to the issuing department, and it went on through. If there were a controversy, or there were objections, at least of any strength or seeming importance, we'd take a look at them. If the officer of the department recommended against, we'd put them in the rejection file. Then I'd send out notices of the rejection and a notice that they could apply for a hearing and set up the hearings that were requested.

Mason: One part of the organization is this: in the Board of Equalization--a state board--you have five members, the controller and four elected members. And it takes three votes to take an action, of course. They divide the state into four districts. Each elected member was the head of a district, and he is the boss in that district.

You very soon get a routine and a regular flow of things, and you notice if anything is different. Rejections began to pile up. rather fast, and there was nothing in the facts that we got reported from the cities or the counties or others that seemed to justify rejection, but there was a rejection. Before we got very far, a report would come out that the place was cleared. They'd come in from Redding and RedBluff and Susanville and most every other place. We were beginning to get the rejections, and they were substantially all, as far as I remember--in time, they were all cleared up.

But word gets out very quick on a thing of that kind. The report was that the member of the board, Bonelli, was travelling out in the districts, and he was meeting with the people who had been rejected. The local people would complain to their local officers of having to pay an extra amount in order to get a license. And soon the complaints got through to the district attorneys and the attorney general.

Rowland: A bribe.

Mason: It was obvious that something was wrong.

Of course, the rest of the story: to escape a subpoena Bonelli went to Arizona, where he had some property, and then went to Mexico.

Bonelli, incidentally, had been a member of the assembly. I knew him as a member of the assembly, and I was impressed that he was an effective legislator.

Rowland: Why did Bonelli bolt to the Democratic party in the '54 re-election campaign?

Mason: I have no direct concrete information, but the registration of voters changed from Republican to Democrat about this time. It was easier to be elected as a Democrat than as a Republican. If he ran as a Republican, that meant that he had a real difficult campaign. If he were a Democrat and could get the Democratic nomination, he practically had the election. The state was still electing some Republican officers, but the state became very highly Democratic in registration.

Liquor Control and Inter-house Tension

Rowland: During this liquor controversy, there was quite a bit of bickering between the senate and the assembly over various bills, and James Silliman said that many assembly bills to reorganize the Board of Equalization or create a new agency were killed in the Senate G.E. [Governmental Efficiency] Committee. Do you recall that controversy, as a legislative secretary to Goodwin Knight--the bickering between two houses?

Mason: There was some. I know that. And that was expected. There were two people in particular on the senate side that wouldn't take directions from the assembly side, and they would be--I'm not talking from memory; I'm just speculating. Those two that would be absolutely opposed to giving the assembly a decision in the matters would be named Burns and Swing.

Rowland: Hugh Burns?

Mason: Hugh Burns.

Rowland: We already discussed Swing, but why would Hugh be so reluctant to work with the assembly?

Mason: Oh, I don't think he was so particularly reluctant, but the dignity of the senate was not in the same class with the assembly.

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Mason: The board had a plan that would limit the number of liquor licenses. That was quite controversial.

Rowland: Burns came out for that later, in the Brown period--Pat Brown's years. He introduced the bill to--no, I'm sorry--it was to liberalize the licenses, in 1962. But you felt that Burns was particularly accessible to liquor interests as a senator?

Mason: Well, I couldn't say that he was particularly accessible. But he stood out in the senate because of his influence. He was the kind of person who had pals, and I would say if a pal of his was interested in something, he would at least be open to consideration of it. Swing had a very active interest, of course. I don't remember just when the bill that limited licenses failed to go through. They had a bill. They had a hard-fought battle and voted it down. Almost as soon as the legislature got home, the board put in their own system of limiting licenses.

Rowland: Why did Goodwin Knight call a special session, finally, in April of 1954 for both houses to work for a creation of a new agency?

Mason: Again, I can't tell you with any certainty why he did. You'd have a better chance of getting it [legislation] through in an extra session, or of getting it through promptly.

Rowland: You played a role in the support for Proposition 3 to create the Alcohol Beverage Commission.

Mason: Yes.

Rowland: Did you encourage Goodwin Knight to take an active role in calling for that special session?

Mason: I wouldn't say I did. I think he was thoroughly convinced on his own view of the situation. I doubt if anybody except Knight himself was responsible for that. If a plan was good why put it off.

Rowland: This is again going back to the staff period. This is before he re-married, when you were defining it earlier, when he would have these late-night staff sessions. Do you recall this idea being floated around at a late-night staff session--certain people taking the position that Knight should call a special session on the liquor bill?

Mason: No, I don't. I don't remember discussion of it.

Rowland: There's been one theory on that, one speculation, that it was politically expedient for Knight to call that because that was in the primary for his re-election in 1954.

Mason: I would think he might think it would be plainly advantageous politically, and that probably did have some influence.

Rowland: Who were his friends down south?

Mason: Edgerton at the time was one of them. Ahmanson was another and the Chandlers, including Buff.

Rowland: Edgerton?

Mason: Yes. I don't know there's any particular friend. He was always open to discussion with the Hearst papers. He knew the Hearst brothers quite well.

Rowland: But he had no relationship with the Chandlers?

Mason: Yes, he was close to the Chandlers for quite a time.

Rowland: Otis?

Mason: He did. The Chandlers were quite active and were quite bold in demanding, until they got up to the time of the break, when Knowland was going to run for governor, and they supported Knowland. But up to that point they and the governor had gotten along pretty well.

Rowland: That'll be a topic we'll go back to later, which is extremely fascinating and interesting, but it was some of his southern California friends that convinced him to call the special session?

Mason: I don't know that was true, but I'm sure there was discussion of it. It's pretty hard to say what influenced a person.

Rowland: You said that Knight tried to assume Weinberger's committee recommendations as part of his own recommendations. Did that cause a schism between Weinberger and Knight?

Mason: I wouldn't call it that, but I can remember Cap Weinberger being quite provoked that the governor presumed to recommend some changes in a rather insistent manner; in other words, "Here's an amendment for your bill." Cap was quite upset about it at one time. I imagine it passed away rather soon, because there seemed to be no ultimate failure to get along.

Rowland: This is a direct meeting that Weinberger had with Knight, or was it Knight corresponding through you to Weinberger?

Mason: A point that I recollect is that there was a set of amendments communicated to Weinberger, and I can't tell you specifically what they were, but I do remember specifically him fussing about it being his bill. Knight talked to many of the members many times, in the office and out. I'd have no occasion usually to remember any specific conversation.

Rowland: Was this, maybe, dealing with the head of the new agency?

Mason: It may have had to do with the plan of the new agency, but this was at the time when the bill was before the legislature.

Rowland: Over in the senate, which seems to be the most interesting house here because they're the ones that tried to chop it to bits, what senators fully supported the Weinberger recommendations and wanted to work with Knight on creating a new agency?

Mason: I can't name them. I can't even tell you--I'm sorry--what Swing's position was, but he was very active in those things.

Rowland: Maybe we'll go to another question, dealing with some underlying movements behind the liquor control. This is one thing that might have surfaced, I don't know. It's just something to throw out.

Rowland: I was wondering if there was some kind of prohibition movement. I was talking with Hugo Fisher about that, and he was always saying that Nelson Dilworth was part of the prohibition group there.

Mason: [laughs] The divison of those for the liquor bill and those against it were the well established "wet" and "dry" groups. Dilworth was an active "dry."

Rowland: I was wondering if this had--

Mason: No, I think the thing was quite well accepted. They would have the opposition to deal with--no question. "Pistol Pete" they called him [Dilworth].

Rowland: [laughs]

Mason: I'm sorry that I don't remember more about that period, what happened on those things. Those were just a couple of bills out of many, of course.

The Liquor Lobby: Memories of Artie Samish

Rowland: Going to Proposition 3, which was the proposition to create the Alcoholic Beverage Control Act, who were the supporters and opponents of Proposition 3 in the '54 election? You yourself, I think, were very active in that campaign in support of Proposition 3.

Mason: I remember this as being a very active campaign. The prohibition people were making their last stand and were for anything that limited the sale and use of liquor. There was a feeling, but I think a majority agreed on the bill, and they were never threatened by the opposition. A person can make an awful noise without it being a threat, sometimes. In dealing with liquor problems the influence of the licenses should not be overlooked, and the influence of Samish was always present.

Rowland: Do you recall how much the liquor interests poured into that campaign?

Mason: No.

Rowland: Five hundred thousand, for instance?

Mason: I don't think they had any figures on those things. One person who could tell you, if he were here, would be Artie Samish.

Rowland: Did the Samish exposé in Collier's magazine throw quite a bit of weight behind creating a--

Mason: I think it had a good deal of influence. There was nothing there that wasn't true, either.

Rowland: That was not true?

Mason: Yes.

Rowland: You would agree, then, that Samish really had control over the governor and the legislature?

Mason: He didn't have direct control over the governor. He said he didn't. He went around him.

Rowland: Tell me more about that. That's interesting. What was Samish's relationship with Goodie Knight?

Mason: If you mean contact, there was none. Knight didn't feel a bit favorably about Samish, and Samish--I doubt if Samish ever had any communications directly with Knight. What would likely happen is that Samish would get someone who was not known as one of his men to make any contact. That is not the way Samish would have worked. He would have sent some friend who would not be associated with himself to deliver his message.

Rowland: Did you have any communications or connections or--

Mason: No, not directly.

I'll tell you a little story. About 1923, the senate had what they called a "post office" in the corner of the chamber, back under the gallery, where they used to mail out things for the senate. They had a little girl who was handling that who was new at that sort of thing, and they had a lot of stamps around there, and I told her one day as I went past the desk, "You'd better look out for the stamps. Keep them under cover, not just leave them out on the desk, because they might be picked up. Somebody might do it."

She said, "Who?"

I mentioned a Samish man.

Well, about the 1954--in the campaign my name came up, and somebody told me, who was present, that Samish didn't have anything to do with me because I had told somebody about this person taking stamps. That was at least thirty years later, and Samish still remembered it.

Rowland: How did Samish operate with legislators?

Mason: He was generally a friendly fellow. We had a situation here where the political parties in California were inactive. The California Republican Assembly, a voluntary political group, came in and elected practically all their people just by being a little active and nominating people. Let's go back at this point.

Samish appeared on the scene in California in 1921. He worked in the assembly, and he was on the payroll, and he became history clerk. (You, of course, know what the history clerk is. The name doesn't describe it, but you know what it is.) He was active around here [Sacramento] since that time until he was convicted. The Speaker at that time was named Wright, of Los Angeles. (His son told me this)--he was around at the time. This was in 1921. They used to put employees on by house resolution. So many persons are put on at so much per day, five days a week. The first day, they put on their more basic workers, the stenographers and a group of sergeant-at-arms, and so on, and on subsequent days others as they were needed. But the second day, another resolution was adopted which put two names on the payroll--just two. One of them was Artie Samish. The other was Earl Warren. So they went to work the same day in the assembly. Warren became assistant secretary to the Assembly Judiciary Committee in 1921 and Samish became history clerk, and ran the history. This gave him an inside look at what was going on there.

The next session, he didn't come back to work for the assembly. He came back as a lobbyist for the truckers--primarily truckers. He represented them for a time and became quite influential.

Then he stepped into a vacancy, a void. There was no person who wanted to run for the assembly; he decided to look around for somebody to give some money to, to buy some stationery and buy some circulars and so on. The party didn't do anything until after the nomination, when in most cases, the election is determined by who was nominated. They couldn't do much after that.

So Artie came along, and he'd say to somebody, who looked like he might be willing to go along--a personable person, easy to elect--and say, "How would you like to run for the assembly?" He did that before they [the political parties] got a lot of candidates running. Probably, right after the end of one session, they'd start soliciting for the next election--"How would you like to run?" He says, "I can help you. I can do a lot of things for you. I'll get you some posters, and I'll get you some money for stamps and some printing, and we'll elect you to the assembly." He would go to the billboard people, who were quite strong at that time, and whom Samish also represented, and say, "Now, I want so many

Mason: billboards for a certain district." That was part of Samish's charge for his service to them. He'd take it out in billboards, part of it. He'd get so many billboards. And the people who didn't have use for billboards but needed cash, he'd get some cash and get some cards and some circulars and have somebody come down there [candidate's district] and introduce him around.

The first thing the person knew, he was a candidate, and having been selected as a person who easily would win, he ordinarily won. When he was elected, he came up to Sacramento, and he didn't know how to do anything. So Samish had somebody show him, and Samish usually treated the people with consideration and, you'd almost say, respect.

I had quite a talk about that one time with a senator from Inyo, Senator Brown. He said, "I have known Samish for twenty or thirty years. He's never asked me directly to do anything. I'm sure I have voted for things that he was for, but he's never asked me to vote for anything. He's always been cooperative, and I have no complaint with him. As far as I know, I've never helped him."

That, I'm sure, was an exact picture. I've had others say that he never asked anybody to do anything that would hurt them in their districts, that could keep them from being re-elected, because they were his men anyway. He had plenty of other votes, he didn't have to have every vote. He developed a group of friendly legislators that was enough to handle most anything.

Samish began to branch out. Rolland Vandegrift told me one time that when he was director of Finance, Samish came to him with a proposition--something about trucks. We had a truck tax law, which was declared unconstitutional. A lot of money had to be refunded and so on. But Samish had a proposition that would help him [Vandegrift] out quite a bit and probably not be bad at all. But Vandegrift just said, "I'd like to look at it. If you think it's a good idea, we'll go ahead with it, otherwise not." Samish didn't follow up, he didn't embarrass him at all by it, but he did have a proposition. Of course, among the people that can afford to pay the most are on the borderline or illegal--gambling, liquor, which Artie developed into. But he would solicit people, candidates, who -- he wouldn't solicit any dry [prohibitionist] or very radical, emotional person.

Rowland: Like Dilworth, you mean?

Mason: Dilworth was a "dry," but not a radical. Samish would select people who'd go along with him and give them a little help, and they voted for him because they felt like voting for him--not because there were threats or anything of that kind.

Mason: One time, and here's the only time I ever saw Artie doing what we'd think ordinarily as lobbying, contacting people. In the senate one day, just before noon--it was a liquor bill--the senate almost unanimously passed it, and there were comments, as I remember, on the floor that Artie wouldn't like that. Then the senate recessed for lunch--

Rowland: They said that right into the record?

Mason: There was no record, on the floor.

Rowland: Oh, it's not like the U.S. Congressional Record.

Mason: At least it was perfectly obvious what they were concerned about. They recessed for lunch, Artie Samish appeared in the rotunda on the second floor with two or three people to run errands for him, and he talked to quite a number of legislators on both sides. It's my guess that he sent his representatives to bring some people to him. About 1:30, when they reconvened, they called up the matter again and voted--I think unanimously in reverse; that was the only time I ever saw Samish lobbying directly.

Rowland: Making a personal appearance?

Mason: Yes. He used to be around occasionally. You'd see him in the Capitol, but you wouldn't see him talking to anybody or making any particular issue. For years, Samish had the upper suites on the right-hand side of the Senator Hotel, and I suppose you know about that. Anyone who was his friend could order anything to eat or drink he wanted, any time, and it worked for years. One of the things that the Collier's article--or a number of other comments that I've heard--were wrong on, Samish didn't limit himself to the legislature.

Rowland: I have a set of questions here on tidelands oil that maybe we can clarify. One big question is, first off, the settlement of the litigation with Long Beach brought in a tremendous amount of tideland oil revenue to the state.

Mason: Yes.

Rowland: What were Goodie Knight's plans for the tideland oil revenue?

Mason: We were going to use it for preservation of natural resources and water development. The state was embarrassed by the amount of money that it had.

Mason: Like Brown has been recently. One of the principal things, of course, were the schools who were all there with their hands out.

Rowland: Principally represented by the CTA [California Teachers Association] lobby?

Mason: Well, they were actually in it, but I wouldn't know whether to say they were principally represented by them. A lot of district representatives. The Los Angeles school district is special in many respects, besides being the biggest. The Los Angeles school district kept their lobbyist in Sacramento.

Rowland: So they also were trying to influence Knight's office to include them in the tidelands oil revenue appropriation.

Mason: Yes.

Rowland: Was the decision of what to do with tidelands oil revenue discussed around the staff in these staff sessions?

Mason: The tideland oil matters were mostly financial and were handled mostly in the Department of Finance.

Rowland: And did you play any influence on--

Mason: I didn't. The principal discussions were outside of the office, I'm sure, of the immediate staff.

Rowland: Who discussed it then? Who was close to Knight that he was able to talk about this with and work out some type of strategy?

Mason: The Department of Finance was the state authority most concerned and handled such financial matters. The superintendent of public instruction's office would be very interested in that too.

Rowland: And that was Roy Simpson?

Mason: Yes. I think, probably, as much discussion, as much influence as anywhere, came from the newspapers.

Rowland: From the press corps?

Mason: No.

Rowland: Clint Mosher?

Mason: Mosher probably, and maybe Behrens had some concern in it. But the Hearst organization were the kind of people who would be involved in that.

Rowland: What plans do you recall that the Hearsts had?

Mason: I don't recall any, except that everybody said, "Here's some easy money. Let's get it." The thing that was most persistent is, "We have natural resources. We shouldn't deplete our natural resources. Our natural oil resource money, we should use to develop our natural water resources."

Rowland: When did the beaches and parks proposals come into play?

Mason: As a natural resource they were included all the time.

Rowland: Who was behind that decision to allocate--

Mason; I'll tell you one person who was interested in that. That was Joseph Knowland.

Rowland: Joe Knowland?

Mason: Yes.

Rowland: Why would he be--

Mason: He was interested in parks. Joe Knowland had been influential in setting up the Division of Parks. He was appointed chairman of the State Park Commission by Warren and reappointed by Knight.

Rowland: William Knowland, too, or was he outside of that decision?

Mason: He didn't have much to do with the governor's office until he ran for governor.

Rowland: Was Knight particularly close to Joe Knowland and the Oakland Tribune?

Mason: Not particularly.

Rowland: There was a bit of antagonism there?

Mason: No, I would say there was not any particular antagonism at this time, but there was no particular friendship, either. They come from different sources, and their lives didn't really cross on many points. Later, after Bill became U.S. Senator they drifted further apart and became real enemies, as instances we have mentioned reveal.

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Mason: I had some friends who were old friends of the Knowlands, and Joe Knowland told them that he had no control whatever of Bill Knowland, that he wasn't taking his advice any more. That's when he [Bill Knowland] decided he wanted to become president by way of the governorship.

Rowland: What role did Knight play in the transition of Long Beach revenues to the state, in the litigation?

Mason: His attorney, the attorney general handled it. Knight discussed the matter with Brown.

Rowland: Pat Brown.

Mason: Yes.

Rowland: What was the nature of the controversy surrounding the signing of the Ward bill by Knight, preventing anti-trust suits against oil companies? This is Clarence Ward. This bill was introduced in 1954, before Ward left the senate--Clarence Ward's bill to prevent anti-trust suits against oil companies. There was quite a bit of press controversy about Knight signing those bills. I think he had a legal decision from the attorney general's office on that.

Mason: I don't remember, except that the general policy of the office--I undoubtedly handled the bill.

Rowland: What was Knight's and your relationship to Joe Shell?

Mason: Joe Shell married the daughter of a rich oil man. That was about the answer to it. In other words, Joe Shell personally, I would say, had no special influence, and he probably suffered, rather than gained, from having a rich father-in-law, because everybody seemed very conscious of that fact.

Rowland: And suspected that he was just representing oil interests in the state?

Mason: Yes.

Rowland: Now, Shell represented a conservative wing of the Republican party. Who was Shell close to in the party? Was he more aligned with Nixon and Chandler, for instance?

Mason: Well, he wasn't aligned with Knight. Who he was aligned with--I don't know of any particular alignment. He appeared to be associated with the Los Angeles group who had control over the campaign funds.

Rowland: Was there antagonism between Shell and Knight?

Mason: I don't think so. I wouldn't say there was any special antagonism.

Rowland: What were your reflections on Joe Shell, your observations of Joe Shell when he was in the assembly, from your perspective as legislative secretary?

Mason: Well, he was another member, a very conservative one, and one who pressed very hard on his bills, but not standing out particularly in the assembly. As I said, I think that the thing that people usually thought of was his family relationship, rather than his bills or his program.

VI REVIEWING THE GOVERNOR'S RELATIONS WITH THE LEGISLATURE

Weekly Meetings with the Governor: Prominent Personalities

Rowland: When you talk about the assembly, I'm getting more interested in that. You mentioned earlier, Knight's good working relationship with the Assembly Speaker Lincoln. Could you tell us more about Luther Lincoln, for instance how Lincoln ran the assembly as Speaker? The only yardstick I can measure against, of course, is Jesse Unruh [laughs] and the way he ran it.

Mason: Lincoln was quite completely different than Jesse Unruh. I never saw any bluster or threats or anything of that kind coming from Lincoln. His conduct always was a matter of friendly attitude towards, as far as I could see, everybody. He wasn't the kind of person who got in fights or disagreements, but got what support he could. He and his brother were interesed in housing developments, and he had a good deal of money invested in that and was quite successful. Since the administration, he has been interested in a savings and loan association. He and Donald Doyle are the principal owners of a savings and loan company in San Francisco.

Rowland: What was Lincoln's relationship with Knight?

Mason: Quite friendly, quite personally friendly.

Rowland: More so than the Burns-Knight relationship?

Mason: Yes. I wouldn't say there was anything in the nature of a personal friendship between Burns and Knight. They just got along well together, and they didn't fight about anything, and Burns was very cooperative. He showed the office a great deal of respect.

Lincoln, on the other hand, was a friendly sort of person. I'd say quite a business-like person, in spite of being not the kind of person who lays down rules or laws or asserts himself

Mason: particularly. And they did have, as I mentioned earlier, during a good part of the time, meetings as often as once a week with a group from the assembly, selected by Lincoln.

Rowland: They would meet with the governor?

Mason: Yes.

Rowland: Who was part of that group?

Mason: Well, Lindsay, from up the valley here.

Rowland: Francis Lindsay.

Mason: He was pretty close in the inside group. Now, let's see who else I can remember.

Rowland: Carley Porter?

Mason: Carley Porter--generally. Porter was very active in school affairs and quite active in water, but as I remember, during the latter of this period, his health wasn't a bit good. But he was a part of the intellectual management.

Rowland: We have this handbook, and we have them keyed there by senate and assembly.

Mason: Here's Unruh.

Rowland: Would Jesse also accompany other assemblymen to meet with Knight?

Mason: No.

Rowland: Jesse wasn't a part of that group?

Mason: No, not at all. Here's [Thomas W.] Caldecott. During the early part of the time, he was quite active. Later he was appointed a judge.

Rowland: With Knight?

Mason: Yes.

Rowland: Would he meet with Knight in those--

Mason: On occasion, yes.

Rowland: So you wouldn't find Pauline Davis meeting with--

Mason: No. [sounds of pages being turned]

Roland: McBride?

Mason: Yes. [James J.] McBride was quite active. He was a close friend of [Harry] Parkman and they worked together quite closely.

Rowland: And McBride would meet with Lindsay and Lincoln--

Mason: No. No. McBride--

Rowland: I'm still looking for the names of the--

Mason: He was in the senate. Senator McBride--is in the senate.

Rowland: Oh, right. He's from Ventura?

Mason: Yes.

Rowland: Here's another list that you might look at. This is the '57 Legislative Handbook.

Mason: Don Allen was always an active member while he was in the assembly, and he was the center of the group that were holding down expenses: Gordon Garland's right-hand man.

Bruce Allen was from San Jose and a rather strong member, but concerned about his own business. Here's Phil Burton.

Rowland: Would Burton be part of the lunch group?

Mason: By no means. Phil Burton would be reasonably influential member because he was so active.

Rowland: Yes.

Mason: [reading from list] Caldecott. Charles Edward Chapel was around the office quite often. John Collier was a Republican, but we didn't get much support there. Charley Conrad was active in affairs, generally. [Glenn E.] Coolidge should've been controller, but he wasn't. Crawford, Crown, Cunningham, [continues to read alphabetical list of names] Vernon Kilpatrick.

Rowland: He was part of that?

Mason: No, not particularly.

Rowland: Did you meet with this lunch group, too? Were you part of--

Mason: I was usually there. Frank Lanterman was. [Harold K.] Levering, more or less.

Rowland: Lanterman was part of the lunch group?

Mason: Sometimes, yes. It wasn't necessarily a political organization. They discussed particular types of legislation at times, particular bills.

Rowland: They would?

Mason: They would, and it wasn't by any means limited to Republicans.

Rowland: Would they discuss major bills on water?

Mason: Water--things like water. Water is the kind of a thing that would get discussed.

Rowland: Who would be the principal person who would carry most of the water bills? [Francis C.] Lindsay?

Mason: Lindsay would have a hand in them and carry them.

Rowland: He would be the committee chairman, wouldn't he, of that--

Mason: I don't know whether he was or not. He may well have been.

Rowland: What committee did most water bills go through? Wouldn't they go to Conservation, Planning and Public Works?

Mason: Yes. I'd say Lindsay was probably the most active on water, of the group. Frank Lanterman, of course, was deeply concerned with public health bills. Levering, who lists himself as a businessman here, was rather active. Francis C. Lindsay. Lloyd Lowrey was in here then. He was the farmers' representative. [continues reading from alphabetical list] Tom Shell, a businessman from Los Angeles.

Rowland: Yes.

Mason: Bruce Sumner was quite active. He ran for re-election, was defeated, and changed his registration to a Democrat and was appointed judge.

Rowland: Didn't he also go on the Constitution Revision Commission?

Mason: Yes. He was chairman of it, the latter part of the time. Thomas Lynch was a pretty steady sort of character. Here's Jesse Unruh.

Rowland: Give me your observation of Unruh in those early days. Was he just a--

Mason: He came up rather quiet, didn't make much of an appearance the first time. I thought it was ridiculous when he ran for Speaker, but he was elected.

Rowland: Why did you feel that was ridiculous?

Mason: He didn't have a chance of winning--quite a new member who, as far as I could see, hadn't made any great record. He was rather forceful about things. We had a couple of bills, with many of the same sections doing practically the same thing. One of them was by Unruh, and the other was by a Republican. I've forgotten who he was, but it was a Republican, and the governor signed the Republican's bill, and Unruh got mad as the devil. The kind of politician he was, he should've expected it.

On the Subject of Highway Legislation

Rowland: Getting back to Luther Lincoln--this kind of fits into the next topic I want to talk about, and that's highway legislation--it seems that there was a difference of opinion between [Senator Randolph] Collier and [Assemblyman Luther H.] Lincoln over highways. We have a reference in our office to it.

Mason: Collier felt it was his business.

Rowland: Highways.

Mason: Yes. Highways were his, and Motor Vehicles were his. It was pretty nearly true. He was regarded as high-handed as you'd never expect a committee chairman could be, and he got away with it. I can understand part of it. The legislature had been Republican for years. When Olson was governor, he had five votes in the senate. One of them was Republican. There were more Democrats than that, but he had five votes. The Democrats began to get more and more members, and so they got within one of as many. Collier, who had been recruited to the legislature by the Republican Assembly, and was their number one boy, way back in the beginning, persuaded another member [in 1957] up there to go along with him. They changed their registration to Democratic.

Rowland: Sutton?

Mason: Sutton. They then had a margin of one vote for the Democrats.

Rowland: To vote in Hugh Burns?

Mason: Yes. From there on, Collier almost had complete, final say on practically everything that happened in the senate because if they didn't get his vote, the Democratic party didn't have the votes to carry the bill and could lose control of the senate organization.

Mason: He controlled that other vote--Sutton's vote--and his vote, and that gave him just about complete control. He'd just say what was going to happen, and it happened.

Rowland: Did Burns feel he owed Collier something?

Mason: Burns did owe Collier. At least, his majority depended absolutely on Collier, and Collier made it count. He got practically everything he wanted in the senate. There weren't enough Republicans to help Burns protect himself against Collier.

Rowland: Yes. Now, what about the Collier-Luther Lincoln problem, over highways?

Mason: I didn't know there was any particular problem.

Rowland: We have a reference in our office to some senate highway legislation that Lincoln changed and amended in the assembly and got passed that really infuriated Collier, and Lincoln apparently took the spotlight on highway legislation there. You didn't see an ongoing friction, then, between Collier and Lincoln.

Mason: Yes, there was a hot point here, but there was no prolonged battle between the two about legislation. Basically, Collier had too much advantage. He had more control over the votes in the senate than Lincoln had in the assembly.

Rowland: I see, yes. Lincoln always talked about a special relationship he had with Dick Graves, who was head of the League of California Cities. Do you recall that, and Graves's role in highway legislation?

Mason: I remember Graves very well. When Knight ran for re-election [in 1954], his opposition was Graves. Graves had been head of the league of cities, until he retired from that, then he was also a member of the Governor's Advisory Committee on Civil Defense.

Rowland: Was there a special relationship between Richard Richards and Randy Collier on the Senate Transportation Committee?

Mason: There could've been. I don't know particularly of one.

Rowland: I know that Richards was vice-chairman, and there must have been, because most of the freeways were built in Los Angeles. [laughs] Richards handled a lot of freeway legislation and must've had a special relationship.

Mason: Well, the auto club of southern California was a very powerful organization in those days, and they set out to get "their share" of the highway money. Their share was on the basis of the population, which meant that Los Angeles got about as much money as everything north of Tehachapi.

Rowland: It was something like a sixty-forty--

Mason: Sixty-forty is what they agreed on on the plan. That divided on the northern line of Kern County, as I remember.

Rowland: What was Knight's position on the gas-tax revenue split?

Mason: Well, again he was from the south [southern California].

Rowland: He was for the south?

Mason: I said he was from the south, and the Times and Examiner were for it, and so on, and he couldn't do much. He didn't. I don't know whether he agreed to it, really, or whether he just felt it was something that had to be done. I had a feeling, but I don't know [laughs] what his was.

Rowland: What was your feeling on it?

Mason: My feeling was that it was unfair to concentrate the freeways so largely in southern California, just as if the southerners never drive on the roads in northern California.

Rowland: How was that decision made?

Mason: It was made by a group in Los Angeles. The auto club was influential.

Rowland: It wasn't a legislative decision, then?

Mason: After the legislature approved it, it was a legislative program, in fact, law.

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Rowland: Again, did staff talk to Goodie Knight about that? Was there staff interplay on the decision to support the gas-tax split?

Mason: I don't think so. I don't think there'd be anyone in the staff who would be called upon for any comments on that. It's just one of the things that he took up with the people on the outside, and very likely the controlling influence would be in the Hearst papers or the Times. J. Allen Davis is the man who'd probably handle it. You may not know him. He was the lawyer for the southern [California auto] club in those days.

VII PARTY LOYALTY VERSUS PERSONAL AMBITION: GOODWIN KNIGHT AND THE REPUBLICAN CAMPAIGN

Preludes to the Big Switch

Rowland: Turning to one other--the last thing we want to talk about, and that's certain campaigns that you might know about, and particularly the one which was discussed in our last tape, but unfortunately wasn't all recorded and that was Newton Stearn's duplicity in the '58 campaign by Goodwin Knight. That's why I sent you these two things from our chronology, which might be able to pinpoint the dates and periods that we're talking about, going back as far as 1954, in the Republican State Central Committee. When you finish reading those, could you tell us about Newton Stearns?

Mason: Yes. [looks over papers]

Rowland: Does that bring back any memories? If that doesn't help, you might want to just put it down and go on as best you can.

Mason: Events: the first one came on without any particular notice. The state central committee is made up of candidates and someone of the opposite sex is appointed by each. Where there is not an office-holder, the candidates take the same place on the committee. They get together and hold a session and vote largely by proxy. Proxy is large part of it. Here, I don't know just what the discussion was, but anyway, Knight thought everything was settled, and he married Virginia and took a boat from Los Angeles out to Catalina on a honeymoon. Where else they were going, I don't know, but I remember that they hadn't been gone long.

They day they left I got a call from Knight via radio from the boat that the Nixon forces had put into effect a campaign to contact the members of the central committee meeting. The campaign was under the direction of Murray Chotiner.

Mason: Everybody who was for Knight got busy and canvassed the state asking their friends on the committee to give us proxies, or if they had given proxies, to be sure to attend the meeting because the presence of the member cancelled the proxy. Everybody who had a hand in things here--I presume on both sides--got busy and tried to round up votes. Knight got, apparently, a working majority, and the contest came to the issue in the meeting. I remember Congressman Pat Hillings was leading the floor fight--the Nixon backers didn't want a roll-call vote, I suppose, because that would disclose the number of votes they had and the names of the persons who supported them. So they stalled and threatened and fussed about it. And on our side we felt quite secure and didn't give an inch. Finally, when the question came up, the Nixon-Knowland group would not face a roll-call vote, but withdrew their motion.

The matter worked out like this. The Knowland-Nixon group made a motion to elect Arbuthnot the vice-chairman of the central committee. A Knight supporter demanded a roll-call vote. A Nixon man moved that the vote be taken viva voce. A Knight man moved the vote on how the vote on that motion should be taken. Finding that they could not get around to taking a voice vote, the Knowland-Nixon group withdrew their motion and abandoned their attempt to elect Arbuthnot.

Rowland: Now, what part did Newt Stearns play in this episode?

Mason: Apparently very little at this stage. Chotiner managed the undertaking for Knowland and Nixon, and Knight managed his side.

Here is another incident that was both interesting and important. Early in the jockeying for position, I think in 1957, Nixon telephoned Knight from Washington and said he was sending a messenger to carry a message to him. The next morning, Clint Mosher of the San Francisco Examiner came in to the governor's office--I was there when he came in. I went outside while he delivered the message. I was told immediately afterward by Knight that if he [Knight] ran for governor, against Knowland, Nixon would come in and tour all over California in support of Knowland against Knight. That had quite an influence.

Rowland: What about the delegate committee deal in 1956? That was the year of the presidential convention and there were rumors that Eisenhower would not run. Knight as well as Nixon were considered possible successors.

Mason: That was when Knowland, Nixon, and Stearns (representing Knight) agreed to each have a third of the members. Knowland had a representative (I don't remember who they were) and Knight's

Mason: representative was Stearns. Of course, you divide seventy delegates into three and you have one left over. That was the one that they compromised on by putting in somebody who was neutral--Senator Thomas Kuchel. They met to select all these [delegates], and Stearns attended. It wasn't in Sacramento. I think it was in San Francisco. The committees of three selected the delegates, and they approved, on behalf of Knight, a number of persons that Knight couldn't even count on for support.

Rowland: This was Stearns approving?

Mason: Yes. They set the thing up so that they would settle it. There was to be no outside contact, nothing at all. These people would meet in a room with the doors shut, and they'd select the people.

Rowland: You were at this meeting?

Mason: I was not at the meeting. Nobody, apparently, except the three were there. They were using the telephone freely.

Rowland: Oh, I see.

Mason: But the word came out as to who they were, of course, and Knight was very much upset. They went on, and I told you the meeting that they had in San Francisco, at the old Palace Hotel. They got pretty warm discussing that, and the most interesting thing there--they found a newsman hidden behind a curtain. [laughs]

Rowland: This is when it was rumored that Knight was ambitious for the presidency, in '56.

Mason: Knight was, this was true. I suppose there is something that happens to every governor that he feels that he's eligible for president and has a chance of being elected. Knight had those ambitions, along with Brown, Knowland and Nixon, for example.

Rowland: Yes. [laughs] Many similarities, I think we find, between Jerry Brown and--

Mason: Edmund Brown senior and Goodwin Knight, incidentally, were close personal friends.

Rowland: I understand that, yes.

Mason: They'd visit a lot down there in Los Angeles. Knight, of course, died several years ago.

Rowland: So we have Newt Stearns now, as representing Goodwin Knight, and selecting numerous people as delegates who were opponents of Knight's, or did not agree with Knight.

Mason: Yes. At least didn't agree with him. I don't know they selected anybody who had made an issue of it, but they selected people whose loyalty wasn't with Knight. Knight finally gave in, gave most of them the control. Then we got into the campaign.

The Surfacing of Intraparty Feuding

Rowland: Now, we're up to the '57 period, in which Goodwin Knight has all of a sudden gotten word that his money sources have evaporated.

Mason: Yes.

Rowland: How did that come about, and what role did Newt Stearns play in that?

Mason: I don't know. The first indications that there was trouble was that a group of Republicans back east was going to make an issue of the right-to-work law.

Rowland: Do you recall the Republicans?

Mason: I can't tell you who it was. They had an organization of their own, and they were pushing for the right-to-work. It was a right-to-work organization rather than a Republican organization. Previous to that time, Knight in one of his speeches had opposed the right-to-work. It was sort of a backhand statement, but the inference was clearly there. You couldn't help but see it. I asked him later why he did that. He said there had been a vote on right-to-work in California not long ago. The question seemed to have been decided. He thought there was now no issue. Labor people were strongly against "right-to-work" and the governor saw no reason why he shouldn't take a position favored by labor.

It came about this way: they sent a representative who went around in the back alley--the governor's office was built around a court, and we always used to call the hall in the back, "the back alley"--and talked to a speech writer and got the statement against "right-to-work" put in a speech. Apparently he cleared it with Governor Knight, though. They [pro right-to-work Republicans] made quite an issue of that.

Knowland was for right-to-work, and they had the support of a good deal of money. I think that was the point in which the industry people of California were the active people in cutting off the money.

Mason: There was a movement for a "right-to-work" law in several of the states. An eastern Republican group was sponsoring it. The supporters of Knowland was just one of them. Right-to-work measures were put on several state ballots and they were all defeated. The Republican administrations in every one of those states which had this right-to-work issue were cleaned out--Washington and Wyoming were two of them.

There is something about voting at this election that I'd like to mention. The voting strength of the labor unions is considerable but the inner members don't necessarily vote Democratic unless it is in a situation where they feel there is a labor or Democratic issue. In this campaign there was an initiative right-to-work proposition filed as a part of the overall campaign. This is a fighting issue to union members and the unions could, and did, vote their membership as a block. While they were voting against the right-to-work they voted Democratic. Governor Knight said the moment the right-to-work initiative was filed that it meant defeat for Knowland.

There was another, incidental, but important factor in this election. There was a school issue which the Catholic church was strongly supporting. They persuaded their members to vote at the election on the school issue, and many voted who had never voted before. This Catholic group, especially Mexicans, Portuguese and Italians were generally Democratic and added their votes to the Democratic side.

We have scarcely mentioned the "big switch." This is what was called the plan by which Knight agreed not to run for re-election but to run for the U.S. Senate and have the governorship open to Knowland who thought being governor of California would give him a better chance to be elected president than being a U.S. Senator. Knight was taken to Arizona and before he left had accepted the plan.

The Knowland campaign was one part of a plan to promote right-to-work laws. In California an initiative right-to-work law was filed.

There was a strong movement among Knight's supporters against the change. Some felt he could be elected in spite of the loss of money and endorsements from some Republican groups.

I was talking to Senator Randolph Collier one time about the "big switch" and he said he thought Knight was foolish for not running for re-election anyway. He had the plane and the cars and the right to move around the state and make speeches everywhere, and he thought he could've won even without the money or the support

Mason: of the large papers. I don't know whether he could or not, but I felt it was worth trying. Knight, however, insisted right to the end that he couldn't have been elected. What he called the "big switch" was the best that could be done. Knight said repeatedly that without the money and newspaper support that were withheld from him, he could not win the primary election.

Rowland: How did the Los Angeles Times and the Hearst papers--what role did they play in this? They're heavyweights in the Republican party.

Mason: Yes. I don't know what the individual people in the Hearst papers did, but they apparently went along with the program of getting the Republican campaign money for Knowland. In the south, the Chandlers took an active part, and particularly Buff, Buff being the son's wife. At that point, she was fighting with the son, but she gave Knight to understand that they wouldn't support him against Knowland. But I think it was the cutting off of the money which was responsible for Knight deciding not to run.

Rowland: That they were the principal ones who cut off the money.

Mason: Yes. They cut off the money, and they cut off a lot of news publicity. If Knight could have run on the Democratic ticket, I think there was no question but that he could've been elected.

Rowland: Yes, I'm certain of that, too.

Mason: But he couldn't. He couldn't bring himself to change parties, and by that time, there was a law which provided that a person had to be a member of a party a year before you could be a candidate. The other side put in the bill to meet that specific case.

Rowland: In the last tape, I recall you saying that Newton Stearns also had a kind of special reward, in a sense, from the Whitaker-Baxter people.

Mason: After the primary, he went to work for Whitaker and Baxter.

Rowland: After the '58 primary?

Mason: Yes. Knight then had to find a new campaign manager and make what showing he could, which wasn't much. Here is the thing about the campaign which I think was interesting--Knowland made a lot of speeches. They were all attacks on Knight. They are the kind of speeches that would've been written for the presumed primary campaign between Knight and Knowland if there had been such a campaign. They had nothing to do with the election of Knowland for governor.

Mason: They were attacks on Knight as a candidate for the nomination. They were primary election speeches. They were entirely attacks on Knight. There were several of them that were used repeatedly.

The only logical explanation I can see is that that was a part of the original deal when Knowland was going to run against Knight. His backers wrote him up a group of speeches for the expected primary election that were direct attacks on Knight, and two or three of them rather miserable attacks. That was about the only campaign material that Knowland and Mrs. Knowland used. Whenever they went out they made a speech attacking Knight and not supporting Knowland for governor. Edmund Brown came in with a speech praising Knight and saying favorable things and supporting him. That had the effect of turning Knight's friends against Knowland and for Brown.

I was talking to Governor Brown--Senior--at the time of the campaign and commented on the fact that he was getting the support of Knight's organization. He said, "Yes." He got out of his desk his campaign letterhead and pointed out to me that with one exception, Brown's campaign committee had all previously been on Knight's campaign committee. That one exception was a woman named Eaton, the woman who runs the prize fights in Los Angeles. One of Knight's daughters married her son. So there's a family connection there. But she had been put on--I suppose Knight left her off because he didn't want to bring in the family part of it, but Brown put her on his committee. As I said before, whenever Bill Knowland or his wife,who took an active part in this campaign, made a speech it was a personal attack on Knight. And Brown would promptly come out with a statement praising and supporting Knight. As a result, I think that from 80 percent to perhaps 90 percent of Knight's former supporters voted for Brown.

Brown was entirely aware of what he was doing.

Rowland: Now, what about the meeting in Arizona? Why did Knight go to Arizona?

Mason: I can only speculate. I wasn't here. I was on Motor Vehicle business back east at the time. (I notice you have letters on the trip I took.)

There were a number of labor organizations that had asked Knight to run. They asked him to run as a write-in so that it would give them a chance to vote on him. The Retail Clerks union was one of the largest labor unions in California, and they gave Knight their most active support.

Rowland: What are your speculations about that meeting in Arizona with Knight, and I assume Kyle Palmer was there, or the Chandlers.

Mason: Mostly, it was operated by the campaign manager in San Francisco.

Rowland: Whitaker and Baxter?

Mason: Whitaker. Clem Whitaker handled it, with some help from Knight's secretary there.

Rowland: Newton Stearns?

Mason: Stearns. Knight, in fact, was ill. He had a very bad cold, but that was still the excuse. They got him away where his friends couldn't get to him, by the friendly touch--"You have to get a little rest new before you think this over"--but they had the only contact. They shut off even the telephone. Governor Knight's own staff in Sacramento were cut off from contact with the governor. I finally called him while he was still there, but he was not committed to run for U.S. Senate at that time.

By that time they had won their point. Knight never wanted to be U.S. Senator. We discussed that a number of times when he was waiting for Warren to resign and he didn't. Some people had suggested that he run for U.S. Senate. He said he didn't want to be in the Senate. He wanted to be governor. At that time, he wanted to be governor, but I have no doubt that he already had the presidency in mind, because he gave it quite a lot of thought.

1961: Knight's Aborted Campaign Against Nixon

Rowland: There was another little episode that came about in 1961, when Knight was considering running for governor again, and that's why I sent you the clippings here from the San Francisco Chronicle--The Edgerton phone call to Goodwin Knight. Do you recall that? [see following page]

Mason: I remember it very well.

Rowland: Tell us about that.

Mason: Where's the proper starting point? Well, Knight was interested in politics. Like many politicians, he could not get politics out of his mind. He was thinking about running for governor and Nixon was by this time clearly thinking about running for the same office. In order to develop support for Knight, I got together, in Sacramento,

Mason: a group of about forty people. This was mentioned only as a friendly get together. We met down in the Senator Hotel in one of their meeting rooms--220, I think it was--at the back of the second floor. I began to invite people to attend that were politicians and not, particularly, the newsmen. But suddenly the newsmen began to call up and wanted to know what it was and so on, and they wanted to be there. They clearly thought that an important announcement was to be made. And they were all there, all of the active ones, including those from the Los Angeles Times and the San Francisco Chronicle--

Rowland: Jack Welter and Greenberg?

Mason: Welter and Greenberg and Behrens and Mosher and several others. Even San Diego had a representative of the press. We came in, and we had a speech, and the thing went along very nicely. The group--of course, they were a selected group. Except for the newsmen, they were selected carefully.

##

Mason: The Knights were registered at the Sacramento Inn. I was with them. They didn't have any car with them. I provided the transportation, and I went out there with them. The call came in on the telephone, and Knight picked up the telephone. It was a call from Los Angeles. I'm not sure whether at that point he said it was Edgerton or not, but at least he recognized the person's voice and there was some conversation.

Knight called me over and called Mrs. Knight over, and he sat on the edge of the bed and held the telephone. He was concerned about what was going on. He interpreted a little bit as we went along, but we listened in. There was a man who was Edgerton. There was a few minutes' conversation--the telephone company record shows about seven minutes. The particular point that the controversy came up over was a statement that was made by Edgerton. I take Knight's word that it was Edgerton, and there's never been any dispute as to who it was. Edgerton admitted that there was not a question, but I did hear the voice, and I did hear what was said. It was like this: "Dick is prepared to offer you an appointment to the supreme court or anything you want if you won't run for governor."

Rowland: You're saying Edgerton said that Nixon was prepared to offer Knight an appointment to the U.S. Supreme Court?

Mason: No, he didn't say the U.S. It was the California supreme court. At that time Nixon was running for governor of California. There was some conversation in the background, at least two people besides the one on the phone, and they asked for verification of something. (This is, I suppose, of no concern.) The person gave that

Mason: verification to know just what was said. I was satisfied the voice in the background was Nixon, but I am not certain. Nixon apparently was with the group. He was present.

Rowland: He was in back of Edgerton, and Edgerton turned to Nixon to clarify something?

Mason: There were two people, at least in the background, some discussion, and Edgerton, as I remember, hesitated and they asked a question. I don't know what it was. I was too busy trying to identify the voice to recall what was said, but there was some conversation, and it's only an obsession on my part that Nixon was there, but I think it later developed that he was--which isn't the point anyway, really. [hands paper to Rowland]

I wrote that shortly after the affair.

Rowland: Oh my! Could we have a copy of this?

Mason: Well, I suppose you can have that. [see following page]

Rowland: Oh, great! Okay.

Mason: That was discussing the philosophy of the fact he didn't say, "I am authorized by Dick Nixon to offer you a job," or anything of the kind. He said, "Dick is prepared to offer."

The rest of the story is, Knight called him on it. They had a news conference down in Los Angeles. I went down. There was quite a bit of discussion. Two or three of the reporters tried to get me to say that Nixon was a liar, which I wouldn't do. I simply said, "I'll tell you what was said and you use your own words to describe it."

Nothing came of it, particularly. Finally, Edgerton came out with a letter. (The letter was addressed to Knight. Mrs. Knight probably still has the letter.) He began, "Now, Goodie--" It was somebody's best effort at being facetious, I guess, or friendly or something. "Now, Goodie, you don't believe all of these things. That couldn't be true. You know this, and you know I wouldn't do that and the other." Here it was more specific.

Rowland: Now, this was a hearing, an inter-party hearing?

Mason: No, you'd call it a news conference.

Rowland: Oh, a news conference.

Mason: Yes.

Rowland: Which led to that article in the newspaper.

TRICKY DICK HAS ENTANGLED HIMSELF IN HIS OWN SLIPPERY WORDS

A careful look at the words used by Dick Nixon in the controversy concerning the offer of a judicial position to Governor Knight to persuade him not to run for Governor of California against Nixon throws some very interesting light on Tricky Dick's devious methods. Dick's words appear to have denied that he made the offer. But just what are the facts?

It is a misdemeanor in California to offer a candidate anything of value to withdraw his candidacy. How did Dick plan to avoid the penalty and still serve his purpose?

Governor Knight and his principal witness are both men of integrity and lawyers of experiance. Their testimony tallies as to the language.

Nixon's emissary, after stating that he had talked with "Dick" and his campaign manager, advised that Nixon was going to run for Governor. Knight replied that he was going to run anyway. Then after using other arguments that Knight should not run, he came to his final point. These were his words, "Dick is prepared to offer you the Chief Justiceship or any other position if you will not run.

Note how "cleverly" this statement was planned. When the story got into the papers and after Knight had made his public statement Nixon then came forward and said that he had never offered Knight an appointment nor authorized anyone to make such an offer for him. In fact his emissary had not in specific terms made the offer and Knight had not said that he had. Knight had stated the words actually used. As a lawyer and former judge he distinguished between a specific offer and a statement that a party was prepared to make an offer.

This kind of an apparent denial which is in fact not a denial but an evasion in not new to the law. It is called a negative pregnant, just why, I cannot say. One example of such a use is within the memory of many of the readers. When Alger Hiss was confronted by Whittaker Chambers (who he had known under another name) and asked if he had known him, Hiss had that he had not known a person by that name. This evasion trapped Hiss and dispite the apparent technical accuracy of the words used, Hiss did go to prison for perjury.

In Nixon's case this "clever" evasion demonstrates that the approach to Knight was carefully planned, and that the emissary's words had been carefully selected for him in advance.

When Barry Goldwater was advised of what had happened he said that it is not unusual for a politian to offer a deal and it it backfires to deny that he had ever made it. Nixon had gone further, he had laid his defence in advance. When we have the whole picture before us it is transparent as can be.

Nixon was just too tricky, however. As a "clever" lawyer he should have remembered that the law looks through such a ruse to the clear facts---just as the public does, for that matter. The public knows, just as Knight knew, that in fact he was being offered a bribe. If this matter should ever ~~should ever~~ get before a court, or perhaps a legislative investigating committee, either the court of the committee will look to the clear purpose of the words and not be mislead by any "clever" juggling of words. Hiss tried this same device and he went to prison. Nixon may not go to prison, ~~but~~ but the Presidents chair and the Governor's office are becoming very remote indeed.

When Nixon's financial deals come to light during the campaign, as they certainly will, it may be very rewarding to the public to watch for more denials and evasions of the same kind as this one.

Mason: It's somewhere in the paper that quotes somewhat, I think from that statement. That's where the thing ended. But it was on the television news all over this country. I don't suppose it hurt Nixon much.

Rowland: Edgerton had been a close confidant of Knight's prior to this, right?

Mason: Yes, he'd been looked upon as one of Knight's friends. At least, he proved to be more of a Nixon friend than a Knight friend.

Rowland: What was Edgerton's background, and how did he get to be a friend of Knight's?

Mason: There were associated with various political, public things.

Rowland: It sounds like word got through the media grapevine, after this campaign rally you held in Sacramento here, that Knight was a serious candidate for the governorship. Was this--

Mason: I'd say that's true. Knight did not make any announcement but it was perfectly obvious that he was running.

Rowland: This was Knight's first acknowledgement that he was going to--he didn't fully acknowledge that this was--

Mason: I wouldn't say "acknowledge," but it was a discussion which indicated that his plans--hopefully, at least--were to run and to be elected.

Rowland: Did you work this out independently, the campaign--or not the campaign. Let's not call it "campaign speech," but just the dinner engagement here in Sacramento, which led to the Sacramento Inn--

Mason: I arranged the whole thing. It started out to be just a few friends.

Rowland: Without Goodie's assistance?

Mason: Well, for him. I mean, he and the group of them. But what made it different was all the newsmen got an idea there was something [laughs] and they came to hear it. I'm sure they drew the same conclusion, that Knight was counting on running, and in my judgement he was. I don't think there's any question about it.

Rowland: That would've been an interesting race. Of course, it turned out to be an interesting race with Nixon and Pat Brown.

Mason: I think it was so clear that Nixon didn't have a chance before he started. He should've been able to see it himself, or certainly some friends should've called his attention to it. He was in no position to win that governorship in California at that time.

San Francisco Chronicle, 5 October 1961

Knight Names Edgerton a Caller Who Offered "Deal"

GOP Bigwig Admits Phoned, Denies Act As an Agent for Nix

By Earl C. Behrens, Political E

Los Angeles

Former Governor Goodwin J. Kn television here yesterday and said J. E ton, high-placed Los Angeles Republi former Vice President Richard Nixon a big State job if he would bow out nor's race.

Edgerton and Nixon immediately denied the charge. A spokesman in the former Vice President's office came back and accused Knight of having been the one who tried to make a political deal. Knight, they said, promised Nixon that if he would not run for the Governor's position, Knight would, if elected, head a "Nixon-for-President" delegation to the 1964 Republican convention.

DENIAL

Nixon is reported to have told Knight that it was "too early to talk about 1964" and was cool to the offer.

Knight, while saying that he talked politics with Edgerton and Nixon at the latter's home in Brentwood, denied making such a suggestion.

Edgerton freely conceded he had personal talks with Knight and asked him if he "had given any thought to an appointive job of any kind in the event you stayed out of the race and Nixon ended up as Governor."

But in these talks, he was merely personally trying to "prevent another 1958 debacle" to the Republican party," he said.

FINANCE CHAIRMAN

Edgerton was Knight's finance chairman in the 1954 gubernatorial race and in 1958 when Knight ran unsuccessfully for U. S. Senator.

Although Knight ducked charging either Edgerton or Nixon with "lying"—he said he hated to use the harsh word of "liar"—he did say

See Page 10, Col. 1

For the text of Knight's statement and Edgerton's letter, Page 11.

'Edgerton Offered Deal'

Knight Tells the 'Facts', Gets Slapped Right Back

From Page 1

their version of what happened was an "untruth."

NIXON

Nixon issued a short statement as follows:

"Mr. Edgerton's statement completely repudiates this whole ridiculous charge. I have no further comment. Mr. Knight has humiliated himself enough.

"Now we can move ahead toward the real goal of this campaign, which is to clean up the mess in Sacramento and provide the dynamic new leadership which the people of California want and deserve."

With Mrs. Knight at his side and with Paul Mason, one of his former gubernatorial secretaries, standing by, Knight detailed for TV, radio and the reporters his meetings and conversations with both Nixon and Edgerton.

He told of the telephone conversation with Edgerton in which the latter assertedly offered, on behalf of Nixon, any job in the State government, even Chief Justice of the State Supreme Court, a post which is not vacant.

PHONE

He cited the dates of the phone conversation from the El Dorado Hotel, Sacramento, to Edgerton's private number in Los Angeles. He even listed the number—WEbster 8-1277.

Mrs. Knight and Mason, who sat alongside the ex-Governor on his bed as Knight held the phone a short way from his ear so the others could eavesdrop, substantiated the former Governor's account of the talk.

Knight said earlier he had gone to Nixon's home at Edgerton's urging. There, on August 7, the former Governor claimed that Nixon said he was not interested in running for Governor but that he would "endorse" Knight "about three weeks before the primary election."

He claimed that Nixon had told him that "he would communicate his ideas to me hereafter only through Mr. Edgerton and in no other way."

Knight said Edgerton's call to him on September 7 had been answered the next day to Edgerton's private number.

QUOTE

Knight related that his secretary, Ann Ladd, who also was present yesterday, had informed him that Edgerton said the call was urgent. That was why, he said, he expected an important message and had Mrs. Knight and Mason listen in.

He quoted Edgerton as saying that he had talked with Nixon, that the latter was going to run for Governor, and then the job offer was made. Knight said he informed Edgerton that his answer was "no" and that he, too, would be a candidate.

He said he expected Edgerton to deny his charges, noting that he had not heard from Edgerton, president of the California Federal Savings and Loan Association, since September 8.

Knight announced his candidacy September 11.

LETTER

Edgerton sent a scorching four-page letter to Knight, declaring that he had "never alleged" in any of his conversations with Knight that he "knew what Dick's plans were because I simply did not know until Dick made his public announcement."

Edgerton further declared that he had "pointed out" to Knight "the rather obvious fact that with your background and experience, you could undoubtedly have any appointive job in the State from top to bottom and asked whether you were interested. You said "No," that you had made up your mind to enter the primary and stick it out to the finish.

"Any statement that I made in the conversation was completely without Dick Nixon's knowledge and certainly without any authority.

QUESTIONS

Knight admitted once during his question period, after the reading of a prepared statement, that Edgerton never had said he was "speaking for Mr. Nixon." This was at variance with other statements during his press conference.

The ex-Governor said he knew nothing illegal in the Edgerton conversation but if there is "an investigation by any legal body, I would welcome it." He said he did not think that "Mr. Nixon should be disbarred" from law practice, as Democratic State Chairman Roger Kent had suggested.

Knight declared that he "never offered a job for a political favor" and gave none.

HARMONY

He contended Edgerton was not his friend but an intimate of Nixon. He also denied that his charges would cause a lack of harmony among the Republicans. He said some of Nixon's friends had urged him to "put party unity above everything."

He also said he was urging Democrats to change their registration for the primary so they can "vote against Nixon." Knight indicated he was not impressed by the suggestion he might be made Chief Justice since "there is no vacancy, nor any likelihood of one."

He said there was no Rockefeller money in his campaign and denied he had sent telegrams to friends in Chicago asking for campaign funds. He said Harry Lerner, campaign manager for Governor Edmund G. Brown, had called him to get details on his row with Edgerton. But he insisted he was not having any political alignments with the Democratic Administration.

EDGERTON

Edgerton in his letter to Knight said he was "shocked" and "bitterly disappointed" in a man with "whom I have been a close personal friend for the past 11 years." He noted the number of times he had raised funds for Knight's campaigns.

"You are further aware that my dedicated objective has always been to try to prevent two top Republicans from slugging it out in a primary with the inevitable result of a party split. It had really never made much difference to me whether you or Nixon ran in the primary provided you did not run against each other."

He addressed the letter to "Dear Goodie" and referred to him that way throughout.

CONFIDENTIAL

Edgerton said any talk he had had with Knight which has caused the current ruckus "was privileged and confidential just the same as innumerable conversations have been between you and me over the years. I had no idea that the trusted friend who was part of the inner circle five days previous had suddenly become, in your opinion, an emissary of an opposition candidate." He said in the past he had "held very confidential personal discussions involving Knight's 'past' and his future.'"

He repeated, "In all of my years of civic responsibility I have never been so shocked and disappointed as I have by your conduct in this instance."

Rowland: And then you said that Knight came down with hepatitis. Was that due, do you think, to the stress that he was under?

Mason: No, hepatitis is a virus disease. Bob Alderman told me that Knight had not felt well for a time, and his doctor had given him some blood transfusions. That's where hepatitis usually comes from. So he probably got it from a transfusion.

Rowland: What were Knight's political ambitions beyond this period? Had he ever considered running for the U.S. Senate in 1964, for instance, against Pierre Salinger?

Mason: No. I'm sure he didn't want to be in the U.S. Senate. He simply ran because he felt he had to do something, at the time, to justify his position.

Rowland: So he didn't consider in 1964?

Mason: I don't think he had any consideration of it.

Rowland: How about in 1966, when the governorship was still not--Reagan hadn't made a decision yet to run for governor, were there any feelers out to Goodie Knight that he might take another shot at it?

Mason: Not that I know of. I don't think he had any such idea. I think he had given it up.

Rowland: He just gave up--

Mason: To spend more time with his daughters and his family. He was acting as president of an insurance company down south for a while, and active in building and loan--Knight told me that he had offered to campaign for Reagan, but his offer was not accepted.

Rowland: Did he campaign for other Republican candidates?

Mason: Not much. When I first met Knight, he was in demand for an after-dinner speaker. I don't know of anybody--even Hope, who had a different technique--but I don't know anybody that had a more humorous technique than Knight did. He had a certain line of stories, and people began to say that he acted like a clown, which got to him quick, [laughs] and he quit telling amusing stories. And his speeches weren't nearly as interesting.

Rowland: What would be your observations of Goodwin Knight in the post-'62 period? Was he one who had given up on politics and felt defeated?

Mason: I think so. I went through Los Angeles a time or two during that period. I called him up and talked to him, but the last time or two I was there, I called up and talked to his wife, Virginia, and

Mason: she said, "Well, he's not getting along too well, but he's getting by in a way." She never invited me to come and stop and see him, which I'd always done before. I never knew why, but I judged afterwards that he was pretty depressed. One of his daughters died, which had, certainly, a very important effect on his health and activity. His family consisted of two daughters and his wife Virginia.

Rowland: He had a beautiful family, beautiful daughters. Was it the younger daughter or the older one?

Mason: It was the younger one.

Rowland: She was married, wasn't she?

Mason: She was married in the governor's mansion and had two children, I think.

Rowland: I have a question about a newsclipping from the San Francisco Chronicle dated December 6, 1957 in which Assemblyman McMillan had some harsh words about your cross-country travels.

Mason: When I first worked for the legislature--it was 1923 and on--Walter Jones was a good friend of mine. He was the capital correspondent of the Sacramento Bee. Later he became the editor here. Years later, Knight was elected governor, and I was appointed director of Motor Vehicles, in place of Gus Henderson. Gus Henderson was a brother-in-law of Walter Jones. From then on, I got every bit of unfavorable publicity possible from the Bee, which the Chronicle wrote up.

There's another point: I took Gus's place,and he went back to the Public Works Department. We hadn't gotten along too well when he was director and I was division chief. We had quite a bit of business afterward and he was always completely friendly and cooperative. We were on the Interstate Motor Vehicles Compact Commission together. I was chairman of that.

The governor was talking about appointing me to a court position.

Rowland: Oh, right. I remember hearing about that. What happened to that?

Mason: Nothing. I finally withdrew. It was putting Knight in too much of a tight spot in a campaign year.

Rowland: What was Burns's position on that? That had to go through senate confirmation.

San Francisco Chronicle, 6 December 1957

Paul Mason Collects for Big Junket

Special to The Chronicle

SACRAMENTO, Dec. 5 Paul Mason, California's peripatetic Director of Motor Vehicles, today collected $1058.53 in expenses for one of the longest out-of-state trips by a State official this year.

It was an 8000-mile, 34-day journey that included attendance at a conference of the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators in Roanoke, Va. On the way, Mason took in regional meetings of the Council of State Governments, and visited officials of various states on reciprocity matters.

Mason, who draws the $19,000-a-year salary of Director of Motor Vehicles while serving as one of Governor Goodwin J. Knight's personal secretaries, was in Las Vegas today on another trip. Then he'll leave for Washington, D. C., to attend the President's conference on traffic safety.

He is scheduled to return to Sacramento December 13.

Mason's travels came in for attack at the last Legislature. Assemblyman Lester A. McMillan (Dem-LA) contended that Mason was "always traveling about, carrying the Governor's political luggage." McMillan said Mason ought either tend to his Motor Vehicle job or step out.

Mason: I've forgotten what he said, but he said to me he had never said that I wasn't fully qualified for the job. I think what his squawk was, there was an opening in the Central Valley, the Fourth District Court of Appeal, and that was his home town.

Rowland: That was whose home town?

Mason: Burns's home town.

Rowland: Fresno?

Mason: Yes. This was a court of appeal case. Approval was by a committee consisting of the chief justice, the attorney general and presiding justice of the particular court. And the reporter raised the point that somebody should be local. Later I talked to the chief justice, and he said that Walter Jones [Sacramento Bee editor] was just interested in getting some local appointment that he wanted, and that the chief justice had talked to Jones, and the chief justice thought he'd get Jones to withdraw his opposition, but Knight was so unhappy about the publicity he was getting--campaign time--that I withdrew. I wished ever since I hadn't, but--

Rowland: So Burns got his man on?

Mason: No, it wasn't Burns' man. It was Walter Jones' man.

Rowland: Walter Jones--oh, I see.

Mason: Burns practically apologized to me for the interview with the reporter. He was very friendly about it. I was always friendly with Burns. I have a high regard for him.

Rowland: So you don't think that Hugh played any--

Mason: Hugh was not in any way responsible for it. The big paper in his home town wanted the story, sent a man out to interview him. Burns answered the questions.

Rowland: I see. So later you got on the Constitution Revision Commission.

Mason: Yes. In my judgement Burns was responsible for me getting on the commission. On the commission I was parliamentarian, member of the executive committee, member of the drafting committee, and chairman of the observance section.

Rowland: When did you first join that?

Mason: When it started.

Rowland: When did it start?

Mason: About '62 or '63, I guess.

Rowland: That was one of Jesse Unruh's--

Mason: Unruh supported it. The man who was really responsible for the constitution revision was Assemblyman Busterud. He introduced the legislation and got the revision under way. It was a national program of the League of Women Voters which was responsible for constitution revision in California and in several other states.

Rowland: I wanted to ask you a question about the Constitution Revision Commission, and that was how the legislative pay raise got into the--how that was tied in with constitution revision.

Mason: Well, it is true that Unruh was actively interested in it, and he was promoting it. They probably wouldn't have gotten the money to set up a commission if it hadn't been for Unruh. There was one condition and that was that the commission itself mustn't tinker with the legislative retirement or salary provisions or reapportionment. So the Constitution Revision Commission made no recommendations concerning the sections on salary, reapportionment or retirement. The assembly proposed their amendments to these sections.

Rowland: Who were Unruh's people on the commission?

Mason: It's hard to say that he had any particular appointees on the commission.

Rowland: So it was Unruh's campaign, then, to get that pay raise.

Mason: He handled it completely. All the assembly did was to supply the language for the sections on salary, retirement, and apportionment. They added it to what the commission had already done.

Then the commission drew up some of the other sections, and they didn't have so much support. They didn't get adopted, but that special assembly section did. It had a lot of support. It had a lot of campaign money, which is unusual for a thing that doesn't influence more people than that one did.

Rowland: Also, Unruh didn't want the Constitution Revision Commission to touch retirement benefits, either.

Mason: No. I was recent president of the Retired Public Employees Association. We came across an interesting thing: the costs of administering legislative retirement had been paid from the funds of the employees retirement system from the beginning. I understand that has recently been corrected.

Rowland: Oh, is that true?

Mason: Yes. The controller didn't have any money appropriated for the administration of legislative retirement. The controller had this money for the public employees' retirement, so he used that money for the cost of administering the legislative retirement.

Rowland: We'd better end here.

Mason: Let me add one final remark. I wish to say to readers of my oral history that my contribution has been from memory without research or notes at a time from twenty-two to twenty-seven years or more after these events occurred. I regret that my recollections of details and times are not more precise.

Rowland: We're at the end of our tape. This was a most informative interview and you have enhanced our documentation of the Goodwin Knight era.

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